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CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.


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CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.

BY

ROBERT LYTTON

(OWEN MEREDITH).

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a.c

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Dedication.

TO

THEODORE GOMPERZ

OF VIENNA.

DEAR FRIEND: The Book now inscribed to you was planned and begun many years ago, during a period of my life which I passed in pleasant intercourse with yourself and others who are dear to us both. Some few of its contents are already known to you, and have indeed been bettered by your criticism. They will now, however, for the first time come before you completed, and in such order as best befits the general design to which, notwithstanding their varieties of form and subject, they each and all belong. I presume not to hope from many readers that patient perusal which, nevertheless, I claim as a preliminary to any final judgment of a work which has occupied nearly seven years of my life. But, if it be honoured by your own, I shall believe that it also

merits the approbation of all who, like yourself, have never held shares in any Joint Stock Company for the formation of Opinion with Limited Liability. Many such men there are not. A few such men I know. I desire their sympathies: and, in that desire, I do homage to their virtues.

Your ever well wisher,

ROBERT LYTTON.

CINTRA, *3d September*, 1867.

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ERRATA.

Page 12. *For* "Palene" *read* "Pallene."
Page 33. Third line from end of poem. *For* "aurorean" *read* "auroral."
Page 68, stanza XLV., second line from the top of the page, *instead of*
"So sunk the race of the Heraclidæ"
read
"So fell the Heracleidæ's fated tree."
Page 75. Thirteenth line from the top of the page. After "Birth" a full stop.
Page 76. *For* "periiunt" *read* "pereunt."
Page 120. Fifteenth line from the top of the page. After "asunder" a full stop.
Page 204 Tenth line of stanza XXIII. After "jay" a full stop.
Page 212. Fifth line from the bottom of the page. *For* "tand" *read* "stand."
Page 232. Fifteenth line from the top of the page, *for* "casts" *read* "castes."
Page 344 *For* "interfeci" *read* "interfici."
Page 347. *For* "reppletus" *read* "repletus."
For "querelum" *read* "querelam."
For "lag" *read* "loco."
For "langissime" *read* "largissime."
For "μίντου" *read* "μάντοι."
For "αντιστυτὶς" *read* "ἀντιστυτὶς."
For "ἠείθμουὖντο" *read* "ἠείθμουὖντο."
For "ὑφάσμειτος" *read* "ὑφάσματος."

It is proper that I should add to these Errata that they do not include several slight inaccuracies in the Greek (in both volumes) which have been accidentally left unrevised.

CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.

BOOK I.

TALES FROM HERODOTUS.

"Ὡς φησιν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ Ἡρόδοτος."

ATHENÆUS. B. xxiii.

TALES FROM HERODOTUS.

PRELUDE.

WITH fancies that, like phantoms, bear
The bodies of long-buried men,
Whose bones are dust, whose spirits are air,
Whose dwellings are the days that were,—
The suns that will not rise again,—
A bark, dream-built to drift along
The tides of other times, I throng;
And, helmless, here and there am blown
Beyond my will, by the Power of Song,
From shore to shore of regions lone
In sempiternal Even lying
Glimmeringly, girt by the moan
Of memories ever dying.
Like that bewilder'd Cretan crew
These old-world-wandering fancies are;
Whose course, unsteer'd by chart or star,

With tugging sail and slanted deck,
Latona's newborn offspring blew
Where'er he will'd; nor could they check
In the plunging prow the spirit that knew
Whose sudden hand his speed obey'd;
As ever about in the billowy dip
And briny dance of the beakèd ship
A golden dolphin flasht and play'd,
While fast thro' shallow foam they flew
Along the shore-lock'd seas, and fast
Beheld the Elean port slide past,
And many a wisht-for haven fade,
And many a slowly-sun-flush't bay,
Till faint their staggering keel was stay'd
Off Crissa; when the crimson day
In lights and ardours manifold
Was burning all the west away,
And, bright beyond the harbour bar,
Brimm'd his blue baths with fervid gold:
Then, o'er the seaborn mountains far,
And far in Even's inmost hold,
The weary mariners (thus they say)
Saw white walls hang in a rosy air;
For so the god had built them there.

I.

OPIS AND ARGE.*

(HERODOTUS iv. 35.)

PAST Ophïusa sailing, long ere morn
Had stolen beneath the summer stars from where
About the waters' verge in paler air
The stars are fewest and most large, near land
The Ortygian mariners their sea-drench'd bark
Moor'd on the shallow sea, a weary band,
By Delos, waiting for the dawn ; and there,
(While broken winds, among the mountains born,
Scarce heaved—the sighing stillness of the dark)
They heard, along wild shores of capes forlorn,
The Hyperborean virgins, hand in hand,

* In the two succeeding poems the narrative of Herodotus has been literally followed : but in the present instance his passing allusion to the supposed introduction into Greece of the images of the gods, wrapped up in wheaten straw, by two Hyperborean virgins, has been taken only as a text for the utterance of some thoughts concerning what is owed, on behalf of human culture, to the mythology and art of the Greeks.

Sing loud, from lands beyond the wind o' the north,
With mystic music moving down the seas
Toward Greece, this hymn, whose latest notes drew forth
Full-crownèd sunrise from the Cyclades :

"Sister Arge, sister Arge, shake thy tresses to the wind,
Till the life that floods them overfloat the lone air with delight!
And tread swiftly down the shadows of the starry hills that bind
To the bases of the darkness the high silence of the night.
Virgin, watchér of the veilèd forms, to whom hath been consign'd
The divinity enshrin'd,
Thou that bearest on thy bosom all the beauty, all the might,
Of the yet-unheard, the yet-unseen, whence floweth sound and sight;
Dost thou tremble at the nearness of the time that we are touching?
Doth the whitefire leaping in the stars that lead us scorch thee blind?
Art thou wary of the sly and wishful winds that would be clutching
At the shut heart of the blessing we are bearing to mankind?
Show not! show not!
Let men know not

What is coming. For the mind
Of the world is undefined;
And the dark not yet the daystar doth release.
Wherefore watch ye well, and ward,
Sister, hold ye fast, and guard
The sacred straw
From bruise or flaw,
And the mystic veil from soil or crease,
Whilst, unseen but aware
And awake, we bear
The high gods safe to their home in Greece."

"Sister Opis, sister Opis, I am moving at thy side
In the power that is upon us: I am treading stride for stride
Down the wonder of the world with thee, undaunted by the throng
Of the startling stars that, brighten'd by the breath of thy clear song,
Give in glory heaven's gladness forth. But oh, the way is long
From the distance of the darkness to the distance of the light!
And, like a shipman eyeing
Along a shoreless sea
That sliding rippled lane the lucid moon hath paven bright,
Which to sunder, and escape from, all the livelong labouring night

His patient keel is trying ;
But, with a fond denying,
It doth ever seem to be
Where it first was on the waters, and yet, o'er the waters ever
Gliding silent with the ship is still beside it, so that never
Is that watcher any further from the light that leaveth dark
The last wave it leapeth out of ere 'tis broken by his bark ;
So my spirit, striving forward, yet doth never find release
From the still-pursuing splendour of the thoughts that pass in peace,
Passing swift from sweet to sweeter,
Strange to stranger, thro' completer
Indications of the stature
Of the beautiful in nature,
To the perfect form and feature
Of the godship of this Greece.

" I heard a gryphon yelping for his gold across a dim
Blue frostbitten mountain gully, where the rock-stream would not flow :
I outsped the Arimaspian that was outspeeding him,
Whose one eye, when he beheld me, shrivell'd blinded in his brow
With a knowledge premature
Of what, knowing, to endure,
Not yet the gods had granted his incompetence-to-know.

And not even so much sound
As doth lisp around, around,
In a little whisperous whirl of windy snow,
My flitting footstep made,
As it travers'd unbetray'd
The silent iron-colour'd floors of frozen lakes below
Those bitter pale Cimmerian skies,
Whose ghostly suns with bloodred eyes,
Thick wrapt in frosty film, make wan
The whited desert of lean plains,
Where hornless beeves in wooden wains
The Scythian and the Sindian
Drive, streaking, as unheard they go,
The echoless white waste with slow
Dark dotted trains,
As silent as, thro' light that lies
Lone on the verge of evening, flies
A troop of long-neck'd cranes.
And the bald-head Argipæan,
Beneath his black bean-tree,
Sat bare-headed in the sun to judge the people, as I pass'd.
But to-night from bowers Eubæan
Blow sweet odours up the sea,
And the Grecian beauty breathes into my being at the last.
Yet I show not,
For I know not,
What is coming to mankind.
White the wheat lies on the faces of the folded Images :

And other hands
In other lands
Are destined to unbind
The veil of this Invisible by slowly-sweet degrees.
Wherefore aye in watch and ward,
Sister, hold I fast and guard
The sacred straw
From bruise or flaw,
And the mystic veil from soil or crease,
Whilst, awake and aware,
Together we bear
The high gods safe to their home in Greece."

A wind, that all night long in Rhodope,
Waiting release, had crouch'd with casual thrills
Of power but half repress'd, now leaping free,
His kindred from the high Keraunian hills
Call'd to him athwart the dark Ægæan sea,
And swept from Athos and the rocky fringe
Of many a mountain-builded promontory
Beyond Palene, those high vapours hoary
That, soon as Morn swings out on silent hinge
Her golden gates against the eastern skies,
Do travel the dim air in search of glory.
Whereat they rose (greybearded companies,
Whose paths above the peakèd mountains are)
Leaving the moonless night upon the wane,
In haste to fill their floating urns with flame,

And midway meet the Light that loves to rise
On Delos, where his mother dwelt. There came
A change across the skies, and in the strain
Of that strange music, that now dropp'd from far
Fresh, clear, and cold, as drops of driven rain
Dasht on dark summits from the morning star :—
"Art thou near me, Sister Arge?"
"Sister Opis, I am near."
"And dost hear me, Sister Arge?"
"Sister Opis, speak, I hear."
"From the cold to the warm, from the dark to the light,
From the wish to the will, from the part to the whole,
To the deed from the need, to the day from the night,
From the brute in the body to the god in the soul,
Man grows.
For, the gods having first morsell'd Man into men,
Men by growing together must grow into Man;
Who grows outward at first, to grow inward again,
Thus outgrowing the point whence his first growth began;
Till (who knows?)
Point by point in successive ascensions, perchance
The high gods, on his being upborne, shall go higher
Up in Heaven, to leave scope for the search of his glance,
And large space for the love in his life to aspire
To the air that feeds fire :
Still, as more and more godlike he grows, to discover
More and more in the godhead, above him for ever;

The wider he reaches, more reachlessness; over
His highest attain'd, still a higher to endeavour
In the Ever-near Never."

Light rose in response mild a lovelier voice
Along the morning air, like a spring wind
Whose benediction bids old earth rejoice
Because of violets it is come to find.

"Sister Opis, I hear thee,
And, near thee,
My heart, with thy song in it, glows;
And the fulness of sweetness o'erflows,
While thy soul from thy lip
All a-tremble doth slip
As a dewdrop in light from a rose."

And, higher thought in higher tone to pour,
The music of that mystic voice intense
Rose on the tingling dark, and more and more
Was felt like light within the listener's sense.

"Blind and mute no more,
As, for ages and ages old,
Upon Time's storm-beaten shore
It dwelt in the dark and cold
Of error, and shame, and wrong,
Man's race, erewhile forlorn,

With speech that is now made song,
And sight that is beauty born,
Shall see, and speak, and be heard;
And the lion, and wolf, and leopard,
As tame as a mountain herd
That follows at morn the shepherd,
By a music and a light
To a fairer land afar,
Charm'd out of the caves of night,
Shall follow man's dawning star;
Where the force, refined to grace,
Of Strength and Beauty mated
Shall give birth to a lovelier race
Of men to gods related;
Till there beat in the old brute world
A human heart that knows
Where the Spirit of Love lies curl'd
In all that breathes and blows;
And a peeping face shall flit
Thro' the leaves of the forest lone,
And the mountain wells be lit
By the limbs of a Naiad known,
And the orbs that brighten heaven
Shall be no nameless glory,
But the beauty and splendour given
To a breathing human story."

Anon together, like two butterflies

Born of one flower that gave to both its hue,
Which sport around each other in warm skies,
Yet all the while their upward flight pursue
Thro' summer's liquid lights and melodies,
Those voices twain on intertwinèd wing
Of woven music mounted, hovering:

"Blessèd art thou, O man, at thy lowest,
O thou lord of the hand and the thought!
For thou livest in that which thou doest,
And thou makest thyself out of nought.
Now to thy cradle we bear thee
The Teachers, the bright, the benign,
That out of earth's dust shall uprear thee
An altar, a temple, a shrine,
And forth of all things that be near thee
(By the touch of a tenderness fine)
To guide, to sustain, and to cheer thee,
Shall summon a Presence Divine.
Beauty, the wave-born, the flowing,
Shall rise, and in rapture give birth
To Love, the man-maker, the glowing
Boy-bringer of Beauty to earth.
Lo! I weigh thee the weight of thy worth.
All things are thine:
All things combine
In a strenuous design
To make thee divine.

Name them, and claim them!
None dare decline
In aught to fulfil
The behest of thy will.
Choose them, and use them!
The moving, and the still,
The upright, the supine,
Take them, and make them
(Both the colour and the line)
Ministers all at the marvellous shrine
Of the strong-bodied, spirit-wedded,
Hundred-handed, myriad-headed,
Mighty, wonder-working Skill!

"The wave shall render thee
Its intricate harmony
Of movement multiform, and gliding swerve
Of shadowy curve;
The mould of Music visible, the free
Lip o' the eloquent sea:
The vine shall fix for ever
For thee her fond endeavour
Of drooping leaf, and tendril-twine,
To richly deck the rigid line
Of limitary law, that lies
Unseen, endear'd by love's disguise:
The milk-white marble pale,
To tell thine eyes the tale
Of what thy thoughts discern

Beyond them, shall avail
Olympian speech to learn;
And, for thy sake, forthwith forego
The formless face of his smooth snow
For novel features, sweet or stern,
To fit thy fancy, gay or grave,
And in unmoved memorial save
The falling leaf, the flowing wave,
From death, that doth their beauty crave:
And, as both stock and stone
To thee their uses lend,
Thou too, in turn, shalt these befriend
With better beauty, not their own;
And every tender slope and turn
Of sumptuous form, well-featured face,
Or pure proportion, pleased to deck
This mortal mould, shall flow to grace
Some calyx'd vase, with curling neck,
Fine-ear'd, or fluted urn.

"Now, therefore, new-grown,
Come forth, and be known,
Thou poor hewer, thou blind-handed breaker
Of wood and of stone!
Henceforth, in thy might, as the maker,
To the ages be shown!
And the gold shall break out into glory,
And the ivory be pallid with awe,
At the frown of the god high and hoary,

That liveth alone in the law
Of himself; when, in splendour strong-zoned,
Zeus, sovran in Elis, sits throned.

"Blessèd art thou, O man! for thou growest
(O thou lord of the thought and the hand!)
In the growth of whatever thou doest,
And the ages await thy command.

"Life's image, born of the brain,
In the form which the hand hath fashion'd,
Shall for ever unmarr'd retain
Life's moment the most impassion'd;
All power, that in act hath been
Put forth, shall perish never;
And life's beauty once felt and seen
Is life beautified for ever."

In that high tone the mingled music shrill
Of those triumphant voices, ceasing, left
The silence tremulous with a solemn thrill,
As one whose troubled sense is sharply cleft
By sudden knowledge of undream'd-of good.
And, for a while, there was no other sound
Than the sea's murmur on the solitude,
And the light winds that sigh'd and whisper'd round
The dawning headlands. Then, with alter'd tone,
Was pour'd from the pale hills one voice alone:

"Sister Opis, sister Opis, thou exultest in thy song;
For to thee the god speaks certainly, and therefore thou art strong.
But me a sorrow moveth in the midst of much delight,
For the grief that's growing in the joy, the weakness in the might,
Of this two-fold nature, each way growing into depth and height;
Whereby more strength more strongly feels more weakness, in despite
Of more strength yet in sight.
For man, from the moment when man
Feels a power in his soul to conceive
Of a power surpassing the span
Of the life he hath power to achieve,
Must be wretched; perceiving, both ways,
The abyss of a boundless Beyond;
With, as more imperfection may gaze
On perfection, more cause to despond.
Evermore must the life of the many,
That in Art is completed alone,
Transcending the mere life of any
One creature, leave hopeless that one.
And no shepherd shall stand on the mountain
As stately as Phœbus the fair;
And no maiden shall move by the fountain
As radiant as Hebe the rare;
And Niobe's marble bereavement,

In anguish made beauty forever,
Shall immortally mock the achievement
Of grief's merely mortal endeavour.
Then say, if thou seest,—for I see not,
What hope is in man that he be not
The architect merely—as, stone
Upon stone, it ascends—of his own
Mortal life's monumental despair?
From insolent heights never ending,
In immutable forms ever fair,
Conception transcending, offending,
And mocking Experience,—declare
What shall comfort the poor life of each,
When, fixt far beyond the soul's reach,
Though confronting the sense—ever there
In completion, abasht, it must gaze
On the full-imaged life of the All?
What shall reconcile shame? and upraise
To man's greatness mere men, that are small?
Ay me! for man's sake my tears fall,
Not seeing whence comfort to call."

Whereto, in answer, the hill-tops along,
That other voice, clear, confident, and strong:

"Sister Arge, sister Arge, dost thou falter? But to me
The god hath given certainly to utter what shall be.
Wherefore listen."

"I am listening, with my spirit turn'd to thee."

"List, and see!—
Base wert thou, O man, tho' thou buildest
Halls higher than ever the emmet,
And poor, tho' thou purplest and gildest
Thy pomp: a fly's wing would condemn it.
But to measure thy weakness, and know it,
Is the crown of thy strength. Wherefore speak,
And come forth, O consoler! O poet!
Thou whose song giveth strength to the weak.
Thou doer, aye unguess'd among
Things done: deceiver of the throng
That's ignorantly thine; whose life,
Living thro' all, unheard proceeds
Amid the noise of mortal deeds,
And shapes of passing things, and strife
Of changing times, which, when thy presence
Their emptiness and little strength
Hath fill'd and interpenetrated
With its own divinest essence,
Grow great and calm, take breadth and length,
And height and depth, and rest related
To those immortal verities
That change not with the changing skies,
And reel not with the rolling years:
Thou Destiny, whose thoughts are seers,
Come forth, controller of the shears,
The spindle, and the rock!

Hero, whose words are victories all,
Enlarge man's life : leave nothing small,
  Inconsequent or fractional :
The world's shut heart unlock.
Do thou with beauty stop the chinks
  And flaws of uncompleted man,
And with music brim the brinks
  Of nature : filling out the plan
Of the life man yearns to live,
  And strives to seize, but never can,
Till thy help to him thou give ;
  Putting space within his span.

" Life's flower hath many springs :
  Leaves fallen feed its root :
Camps, nations, courts, and kings
  Murmur, and soon are mute.
But over the bloody plain
  Where a nation's life lies lost,
From the bodies of many slain
  Doth arise but a single ghost.
Nor chance nor change can mar
  The beauty of her pale brows,
Whereon the pilot star
  Of the wandering Future glows :
She, that is all pure essence,
  Can no more suffer wrong :
Men call her name The Presence
  Of the Past made theirs in Song.

And this most beauteous child
Of a Past that cannot die,
Whose spirit doth reign strong-will'd
O'er the realm of Futurity,
By means of her mighty sons, that are
The makers of man's thought, fair, and far
From the perishing Present's fitful strife,
Upbuildeth the beautiful dome of life ;
All throng'd with lucid shapes that be
Clothed each in the calm of eternity ;
Those mighty memories of mankind,
Whose home is the universal mind.
Wherefore yet I praise man at his lowest,
Being lord of the living voice.
Hark, O wind, thro' the reeds where thou blowest,
Pan cometh ! I bid thee rejoice.
The ægipans, satyrs, and fauns,
To his shrill pipe trooping after,
Trample over the lanes and the lawns,
With timbrel and tipsy laughter :
But after Pan cometh Apollo,
Whose music is sound made fire,
And the gods and the heroes follow
The loud twang of his golden lyre."

Down swept a rushing sound, across the lone
And melancholy mountains clothed in cloud,
As of the multitudinous hurrying on

Of unseen feet, and murmurings of a crowd,
With music, cymbals faint, faint flutes ; as when
On festal days, with pomp processional,
And minstrelsy, and dancing maids and men,
Some merrymaking city pours thro' all
Her gaping gates a jubilant swarm ; whose sound
Among the humming hills is sometimes heard
Where gorges open, and then shut again,
Sudden, i' the shifting vale, with all its train
Of mirthful tumult manifold, and drown'd
In such deep silence that the hooting bird,
That haunts by mountain tarns, is audible
Far off once more, and audible alone,
In the reinstated stillness, with stern tone
Chiding the solitary air. So fell
Down vaporous precipices, soon almost
As heard, those sounds of things unwitness'd, lost
Along the dreaming gulfs, and roll'd away.
Anon once more, against the dawning day,
The former voices; shrill distinct, as darts
That, clash'd against sonorous metal, sing,
Sharp tune ; whereto clear echoes from the hearts
Of hollow caves rang response, vibrating :

"Sister Opis, sister Opis, on a silver wave of song
Sweetly streaming,
Dim as dreaming,
The deep melodies among,

By thy singing,
Bliss is bringing
All my being. Yet prolong
The loved rapture!"

"Listen, Sister!
For my spirit on the throng
Of the ages rushes strong.
When the strong archetypal moulders
Of mortal clay
Have bequeath'd to unborn beholders
The forms that stay
Fixt and fast
In the flux of time,
For man's thought, cast
In a mould sublime;
And the few fine Spirits first needed
To build up the walls of the world,
(From the Protoplast freshly proceeded)
Having, each from his fortress, unfurl'd
The standard of man's realm, made fuller
For all men by one man alone,—
Over marble, or music, or colour,
Or language,—are gather'd and gone
From the sun's sight, like stars of the morning,
Lost in level enlargements of light,
Where the world needs no longer their warning
Or witness to steer through the night,

Then the men that come after, not equal
In height, but more spacious in span,
Shall combine and complete in the sequel
Each sublime isolation: and man,
Grown compacter, shall gather together
His faculties, full-grown before
Each up to the length of its tether,
But scatter'd and single of yore.
No piling on Ossa of Pelion,
Leaving valleys uncultured and lone:
But the whole world in high perihelion,
Breathing light, shall set broad to the sun!
And for this I praise man, at his lowest,
Being heir to heights higher than his;
For, when even his march is at slowest,
He is ever beyond what he is.

"The form of the shining present,
By the shade of the past controll'd,
As the curve of the young moon's crescent
Is shapen about the old,
In the self-completing orb
Of a life, that in its own light
Doth the shade of itself absorb,
Man lifteth thro' time's lone night.
In the present his future he feeleth,
Formeth and holdeth it fast,

And himself to himself revealeth
Himself by himself surpast.

" But see! the great light is beginning
Up yonder; with sharp silver thinning
The thick night, and peeling away
The black shell that shut down the day.
Leave we here on the high promontory,
That is toucht at the tops with the glory,
Each great Form, folded fast head and feet,
And swathed in the sweet yellow wheat;
Best befitting for symbol and sign:
For man's first need is merely to live,
His next to make mere life divine;
And the corn-crownèd Ceres must give
The first gift to the god-crownèd shrine.
With the hard hand that hacks out the harvest
From the solid resistance of things,
Poor peasant, a portion thou carvest
Of ease for thy sons that be kings!"

By this, severe cold amber-colour'd light
Was sharpening the dark edges of the sea:
From shadowy summits, slowly stolen in sight,
Thro' the still air the voice came, carolling free:

" Come, Sister, come down
The deep meadows unmown!

Down, Sister, deeper and deeper down,
Thro' the lone bright lands
Not ours, where hands
Happy and fair, in the years unshown,
Of boy and of maiden,
Shall our sepulchres crown,
Flower-deck'd and gift-laden,
With green myrtle coronals oft.
Light let us stray
Down the valleys away,
And where shadows wave soft
Thro' dim olive-woods, sighing
With the low undertone
Of a life ever dying,
Ere her crownet of dew the pale cistus hath doff'd.
Leave the High Ones alone
And aloft, fitly lying
In the light that lives lonely aloft.
Down ! down !"

Whereto, with mimic echo, from a cloud
Brightening upon the impenetrable peak
That his dim head in heaven did highest shroud,
An answering voice far off came faint and weak :

" Down, down,
And deeper, Sister, and deeper down,
I come, I come
To our long-sought home !

And, lightly stepping, my step unknown,
Not a print, as we pass, ever presses
From the blossoming grasses below.
We, the breath of the morn in our tresses,
And the beam of the morn on our brow!
Nevermore to the fierce wildernesses,
And the hollow rocks heavy with snow,
Nevermore to the storm-beaten beaches,
Whose black gulfs their chafed surges churn
Into bleak foam, the bitter wind bleaches,
Shall our god-guided footsteps return!
But here, at the last, our life reaches
The limit, and drops in the urn,
And passes complete,
At the touch of a hand
Whose touching is sweet,
To a sweeter land."

The louder voice then, with a sudden cry,
Peal'd from the lower heights imperatively:

"Wherefore stir not a straw
From the sacred Awe,
And the mystic Veil neither crush nor crease,
But, awake and aware,
Hid in Delos, there
Leave the High Gods o'erlooking their home, sweet Greece!"

Whereat both voices, fainter grown, did seem
Strange as the ebbing music of a dream :

" Hush, O hush, within the sense
Of their own wise reticence,
Thoughts too sweet for song to sing
Even where none be listening !
Breathe, O breathe, no sound less light
Than a lizard's startled flight
Thro' the leaves, when lovers pass
O'er the silent summer grass !
Leave the dreaming world to waken,
Wistful of the mystic numbers
Of the music that hath shaken
With prophetic sound its slumbers.
Let the patient Many fashion
Into common use the true
Substance of the solemn passion
Of the sudden-minded Few.
Stay not, singer ! song will stay
Where who sung it sings no more.
Doubt not, doer ! love will pay
Life's deed done when life is o'er.
Haste ! away, before the day
Show by shadows where we stray !
Violets that are not bow'd
By the shadow of a cloud
Laden with midsummer thunder ;

Eyes down-lidded in dim sleep,
'Neath whose fringes dare not peep
Any dream that passeth under;
Be, O earth, more still than those,
Where our unseen footstep goes!"

And, like a flock of swallows on swift wing,
Before the falling of the rain in Spring,
Light-wavering o'er a whisperous lowland green;
That suddenly, from none knows whence, are seen,
And in and out the maze of their own making
Inextricably wheel, and wink, and find
And lose themselves, but at the last, forsaking
Their momentary haunt, do leave behind
In the grey light upon the grass beneath
Not any shadow; so the scatter'd breath
Of those melodious voices, here and there
Along the desultory morning air
Dispersing, left at last within the wind
Not even a wandering echo, as it ceased
Against the startling stillness of the east;
Where now conspicuous, by no cloud confined,
But stern, in steadfast skies, with serious light,
Lay bare the starless forehead of the Dawn.
The sparkle of a golden sandal shined
One moment on the mountain peak. A white
And vaporous hem of eddying vesture, drawn
Across a saffron-colour'd cliff from sight

Slowly, left all along the mountain lawn,
Among the tawny grass and camomile,
A tremulous streak, soon quench'd in day's strong smile,
Of waning splendour. Then those mariners all
Rose up amazed, and drew out of the deep
The hookèd anchor, and drove out to sea
Their little bark beneath a shadowy shore.
But, while they set the sail, and plied the oar,
Full-lighted on the heavenly mountain wall
Leap'd the large Sunrise, and all round shook free
His flamy wings: when lo! on every steep,
Wrapt with the aurorean vapour rolling high,
An august image stood, majestical,
With lifted arm, far off, 'twixt earth and sky.

II.

CRŒSUS AND ADRASTUS.

(HERODOTUS i. 35.)

FORTUNE, that walks above the heads of men
I' the rolling clouds, the witless denizen
Of airy Nothing, by Necessity
Among the unsteady Hours with hooded eye,
Subservient to a will not hers, is led:
And, as she passes, oft upon his head
That, underneath heaven's hollowness, doth stand
Highest of men, her loose incertain hand
Lets fall the iron wedge and leaden weight.

Crœsus, the lord of all the Lydian state,
Of men was held the man by Fortune best
With her unheedful blind abundance blest:
Because all winds into his harbours blew
Opulent sails; because his sceptre drew
Out of far lands a majesty immense;
Because, to enrich his swol'n magnificence,

The homage of a hundred hills was roll'd
Upon a hundred rivers ; because gold
And glory made him singular in the smile
O' the seldom-smiling world a little while.
To him, in secret vision, at the deep
Of night, what time Fate walks awake thro' Sleep,
The gods reveal'd that, in the coming on
Of times to be, Atys, his best-loved son,
Untimely, in the unripe putting forth
Of his green years, and blossom-promised worth,
By an iron dart must perish.
Then the king,
Long while within himself considering
The dreadful import of the dream,—in fear
Lest any iron javelin, lance, or spear,
Left to the clutch of clumsy Chance, should fall
On Atys,—gave command to gather all
Such weapons out of reach of him he loved,
Safe in a secret chamber far removed.
And,—that the menaced prince no more should take
His wont i' the woods, with baying dogs to break
The rough boar's ambush, nor the lion wound,
Nor flying stag, with dexterous darts,—he found,
And wived to Atys, the most beautiful
Of Lydian women : lovelier than the lull
Of summer eves in lands where Summer fills
With slumbrous light the slopes of snowy hills
Flusht by a fleeting sun. So fair was she

Whose claspèd arms should gentle gaolers be
To Crœsus' chiefest treasure.
This being done,
The king was comforted about his son.

But while the nuptial feast, at 'mid of mirth,
O'erflowed with festival the golden girth
Of the king's palace,—while, with fold on fold
Of full delight, the mellow music roll'd
From Lydian harps a heaving heaven of sound
In the gorgeous galleries, and garlands crown'd
Warm faces in a mist of odours rare,—
There came before the king at unaware
A stranger from beyond the storm-beat sea:
A man pursued by pale Calamity,
With hands polluted; on whose countenance
Was fix'd the shadow of foregone mischance.
His slow steps up the hymeneal hall
Struck sounds that sent deep silence on thro' all
That swarming revel. Music's broken wing
Flutter'd and strove against the check'd harp string:
And he that pour'd stood, holding half-way up
The two-ear'd pitcher o'er the leaf-twined cup,
While the wine wasted: he that served lean'd o'er
The savorous fumes of anice-spicèd boar,
With trencher tilted: they whose limbs were dropp'd
At ease on purple benches, elbow-propp'd,
Half rose, and, stooping forward, shock'd awry

From jostled brows, sloped one way suddenly,
Their slanted crowns, blue-boss'd with violet,
Or dropping roses: each with eyes wide-set
In unintelligent wonder on the wan
And melancholy image of that man.
He, moving thro' the amazement that he caused,
Approach'd, unbid, the throne of Crœsus; paused,
And there, with groans from inmost anguish brought,
The hospitable-hearted king besought
His hands by the Lydian rite to purify
From taint of blood.
To whom, when presently
He had his asking granted, Crœsus said:

"Whence art thou, stranger? and whose blood hast shed,
That doth so fiercely clamour at the porch
Of Heaven's high halls? What burning wrong doth scorch
Sweet rest from out the record of thy days?"

To whom that other:
"But that Judgment lays
Foundations deeper than Oblivion,
I would my shadow from beneath the sun
Had pass'd for ever; being the most forlorn
Of men! A Phrygian I, and royal-born;
The son of Gordius, son of Midas; who,
Ill-starred! unwittingly my brother slew.

For this, my father from his much-loved face,
And all the happy dwellings of my race,
Me into wide and wandering exile drave :
Whence, flying on the salt white-edgèd wave,
Cast out from comfort unto stars unknown,
My hollow ship, before the north wind blown,
Fate to these shores directed ; where I stand
A friendless man, sea-flung on foreign land.
In thus much learn, O king, from whence I came,
And what I am. Adrastus is my name."

The monarch smiled upon him, and replied,

" Thy friends are ours : thy land to ours allied :
If not with kindred, here with kind, thou art.
A frowning fate to bear with smiling heart
Is highest wisdom. In our court remain.
Cease to be sad. Nor tempt the seas again."

So in the Lydian court Adrastus stay'd,
Eating the bread of Crœsus : and obey'd
The kindly king, well-pleased to roam no more.

Now, at that time, a horrible wild boar,
By hunger driven from his lair, below
The dells dark-leavèd, lit with golden snow,
Where Mysian Olympus meets the morn,
Made ravage in the land ; despoil'd the corn,

The tender vine in many a vineyard tore,
Each sapling sallow olive wounded sore,
And oft, about the little hilly towns
And stony hamlets, where high yellow downs
Pasture, among cold clouds, the mountain goat
That wanders wild from wattled fold remote,
His fierce blood-dripping tusk foul mischief wrought.
For this, the sorely-injured Mysians sought
At many times the ruinous beast to slay;
But never yet at any time could they
Come nigh him to his hurt. For he, indeed,
Slew many of them, and the rest had need
Of nimble feet in fearful flight to find
Unworthy safety. Thus was ruin join'd
To ruin.

Therefore, unto Crœsus now
They sent an embassage; that he should know
The damage done them by this savage thing;
Entreating much, moreover, that the king,
With certain of the Lydian youths, would send
Atys, the prince, to help them make an end.
For of all noble youths in Lydian bound
Atys the most high-couraged was renown'd,
Nor match'd in martial vigour.

Crœsus then,
When he had heard the message of these men,
Made answer to the Mysians:

"For our son,

Ye shall not have him. Think no more upon
That matter. For, indeed, the crescent light
That was newborn to gild his nuptial night
Is yet the unfinish'd circlet of a moon.
And shall a husband leave a wife so soon,
Ere the first spousal month be sped, to lie
On hill-tops bare, beneath the naked sky,
Neglecting wedlock young, and the sweet due
Of marriage pillows, Mysians, for you?
But since (touching all else) we love you well
And fain would see the huge beast horrible,
That hath such havoc made of your fair land,
Defeated, we will send a chosen band
Of our best valours; men that shall not miss
What is to do. Be ye content with this."

But, when the Mysians were therewith content,
The son of Crœsus, hearing these things, went
To Crœsus, and said to him:
"In time past,
Father, or in the chase, or war, thou wast
The first to wish me famous; who dost now
To me forbid the javelin and the bow.
Wherefore? For yet I deem that thou hast not
In me detected any taint or spot
Of fear, dishonouring one to honour born.
Yet think how all men from henceforth must scorn
Thy son, whom, being thy son, they should revere,

In him revering thee, when I appear
Among them in the agora : I alone
Of all men missing honour to be won
From this adventure ! For what sort of a man
To the coarse general (that is quick to scan
Faults in superior natures) shall I seem ?
Or what to my fair wife ? How shall she deem
Henceforth of him, who in her white arms lay
No less than as a god but yesterday ?
Wherefore, lest I some memorable deed
Now miss to do, I pray thy leave to lead
The honourable ardours of this chase,
True to my noble name and princely place ;
Or, this denied, vouchsafe, at least, to say
For what just cause I must remain away.
Since I, in all things, would my heart convince
The king must needs be wiser than the prince."

But Crœsus, weeping, answered :

"Not, my son,
Because in thee aught unbecoming done
Displeased me, nor without sad reason just,
And strict constraint to do what needs I must
(Not what I would, if what I would might be !)
Have I thus acted. For there came to me
A vision from the gods, upon my bed,
In the deep middle of the night, which said
That in the days at hand, an iron dart

Thee from my love, and from thy life, must part.
For this, thy marriage have I hasten'd on :
That, with occasion due, thou should'st, my son,
Awhile withhold thee from thy wont to seek
The haunts of lions, or with dogs to break
The rough boar's ambush in the rooty earth,
But rest, companion'd, by the pillar'd hearth,
To one new-wedded a befitting place :
For this, did I forbid thee to the chase :
For this . . . O stay, my son, by thy fair wife,
And, in prolonging thine, prolong my life ! "

And his son answer'd :

" Wisely, since the dream
Came from the all-wise gods, as I must deem,
Wisely, dear head, and kindly, hast thou done ;
Thus, with forethoughted care, to hold thy son
Back from the far-seen coming of the wave
Of Fate,—if him forethoughted care could save !
But I, indeed, as touching this same chase,
Can see no cause for fear. In every place
Death's footsteps fall. Nor triple-bolted gate,
Nor brazen wall, can shut from man his fate.
Yet, had the vision prophesied to me
That, or by tooth, or tusk, my death should be,
I had been well content to stay at home ;
Leaving the coming hour, at least to come
By me not rashly met in middle way.

But since 'twas said an iron dart must slay
Me, to black death appointed, I might fear
An iron dart as well, tho' staying here,
As there, in open field, among my friends.
For who can lock his life up at all ends
From charmèd Chance, that walks invisibly
Among us, to elude the dragon eye
Of Policy, and the stretch'd hand of Care?
Wherefore, I pray thee yet that I may share
What honour from this hunt is to be won,
Before death find me. Since a man may shun
Honour, yet shunning honour all he can,
He shuns not Death, which finds out every man."

Then Crœsus, overcome, not satisfied,
From under moisten'd eyelids, doubtful, eyed
The impatient flushing in the brighten'd cheek
Of Atys. And, because his heart was weak
From its vague fears to shape foundation fast
For judgment, "Since, my son," he sigh'd at last
"My mind, tho' unconvinced, thy words have shaked,
Do as thou wilt."
But, like a man new-waked
From evil dreams, who longs for any light
To break the no-more-tolerable night,
Soon as, far off in the purple corridor,
The sandal clicking on the marble floor
Ceased to be heard, and he was all alone,

And knew that Atys to the chase was gone,
He started up in a great discontent
Of his own thoughts, and for Adrastus sent.
To whom the monarch thus his mind express'd:

"Adrastus, since, not only as my guest
But as my friend, thou hast to me been dear,
If aught of natural piety, and the fear
Of Zeus, whom I by hospitable rites
Have honour'd, honouring thee, thy heart delights
To harbour, heed thou well my words. For I,
When thou, pursued by pale Calamity,
Didst come before me, thee, upbraiding not,
Did purify, and, as a man no spot
Of blood attainted, to my hearth received,
And there with ministering hand relieved.
Now, therefore, follow to the chase my son,
Nor leave him ever till the chase be done;
His guardian be; prevent him in the way,
And let no skulking villain lurk to slay
The son of him that hath befriended thee.
Moreover, for thine own sake, thou shouldst be
Of this adventure; so, to signalise
A noble name by feats of fair emprise;
Since thy forefathers of such feats had praise,
And thou art in the vigour of thy days."

Adrastus answer'd

"For no cause but this
(Since Crœsus' wish unto Adrastus is
Sacred as law delivered from above)
In this adventure had I sought to move.
For 'tis not fit that such a man as I,
Under the shadow of adversity,
Should with his prosperous compeers resort;
And, not desiring this, from martial sport
Among the Lydian youths, with spear or bow,
I have till now withheld myself. But now
Since I am bid by him I must obey,
Bound to requite in whatsoe'er I may
Kindness received, this chase I will not shun.
Thou, therefore, rest assured thy royal son,
Dear Paramount, so far as lies in me,
His guardian, shall unharm'd return to thee."

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Meanwhile, the huntsmen had with leathern thongs
The lean hounds leash'd, and all that fair belongs
To royal chase appointed, as was fit;
With pious rites around the altar, lit
To solemn Cybele, at whose great shrines
On wooded Ida, mid the windy pines,
Or Tmolus, oft the Sardian, to invoke
The mighty Mother, bade the black sheep smoke;
And Artemis, the silver-crescented,
Adoring whom, a white kid's blood was shed,
And crowns of scarlet poppies, intermix'd

With ditany, among the columns fix'd,
Or hung, fresh-gather'd, the high stones upon.

And now the Lydian youths (with whom the son
Of Crœsus and the Phrygian stranger) blew
The brazen bugles, till the drops of dew
Danced in the drowsy hollows of the wood;
And the unseen things that haunt by fell and flood,
Roused by the clanging echoes out of rest,
Shouted from misty lands, and, trampling, press'd
Thro' glimmering intervals of greenness cold,
To hang in flying laughters manifold
Upon the march of that blithe company:
Great-hearted hunters all, with quiver'd thigh,
And spear on shoulder propp'd, in buskins brown
Brushing the honey-meal and yellow down
From the high-flowering weed, whilst, in their rear,
The great drums throbb'd low thunder, and the clear
Short-sounding cymbals sung; until they came
To large Olympus, where the amber flame
Of morn, new-risen, was spreaded broad, and still.
There, for the ruinous beast they search'd, until
They found him, with the dew upon his flank
Couch'd in a hollow cold, beneath the dank
Roots of a fallen oak, thick-roofed, dim.
And, having narrowly encircled him,
They hurl'd their javelins at him. With the rest
That stranger (he that was King Crœsus' guest,

The Phrygian, named Adrastus, purified
Of murder by the monarch), when he spied
The monster, by the dogs' tenacious bite
And smart of clinging steel, now madden'd quite,
Making towards him,—hurl'd against the boar:
Which missing, by mischance he wounded sore
Atys; through whose gash'd body, with a groan
The quick life rush'd.

Thus fates, in vain foreknown,
Were suddenly accomplish'd. For those Powers
That spin, and snap, the threads of mortal hours,
Had will'd that Crœsus nevermore should hear
The voice of Atys; unto him more dear
Than fondest echo to forlornest hill
In lonesome lands, more sweet than sweetest rill,
Thro' shadowy mountain meadows murmuring cold,
To panting herds: nor evermore behold
The face of Atys; unto him more fair
Than mellow sunlight and the summer air
To sick men waking heal'd. Now, therefore, one,
Having beheld the fate of the king's son,
Fled back to Sardis, and to Crœsus said
What he had seen:—how that a javelin, sped
By that ill fated hand, to nothing good
Predestined, from the blot of brother's blood
By Crœsus purified, yet all in vain,
Since still to bloodshed doom'd,—had Atys slain,
Fulfilling fates predicted.

Crœsus then,
Believing that he was of living men
Most miserable, who had purified,
Himself, the hand by second slaughter dyed
In the dear blood of his much-mourn'd-for son
(Since by his own deed was he now undone)
Uplifted hands to Heaven, and vengeance claim'd
Of Zeus, the Expiator; whom he named
By double title, to make doubly strong
A twofold curse upon a twofold wrong:
As God of Hospitality,—since he
That was his guest had proved his enemy;
As God of Private Friendship,—since the man
That slew his son was his son's guardian,
To whom himself the sacred charge did give.

Therefore he pray'd, "Let not Adrastus live!"

But, while he pray'd, a noise of mourning rose
Among the flinty courts: and, follow'd close
Out of the narrow streets by a dense throng
Of people weeping, slowly moved along
The Lydian hunters bearing up the bier
Of Atys, strewn with branches; in whose rear,
Down-headed, as a man that bears the weight
Of some enormous and excessive fate,
The slayer walk'd.
Full slowly had they come,
With steps that ever slacken'd nearer home,

And heavier evermore their burthen seem'd,
As ever longer round their footsteps stream'd
The woeful crowd ; and evermore they thought
Sadlier on him to whom they sadly brought
His hope in ruins. When they reach'd the gate
The western sky was all on flame. Stretch'd straight
Thro' a thick amber haze Adrastus saw,
As in a trance of supernatural awe,
The high slant street ; that lengthen'd on, and on,
And up, and up, until it touch'd the sun,
And there fell off into a field of flame.
He knew that he was bearing his last shame ;
And all the men and women, swarming dim
Along the misty light, were made to him
Shadows, and things of air, for all his mind
Was pass'd beyond them. So, with heart resign'd
To its surpassing sorrow, he bow'd down
His head, and follow'd up the column'd town
The bier of Atys, without any care
Of what might come : because supreme despair
Had taken out the substance from the show
Of the world's business, and his thoughts were now
In a great silence, which no mortal speech,
Kind, or unkind, might any longer reach.
Meanwhile, with melancholy footsteps slow,
Slow footsteps hinder'd by the general woe,
Those hunters mount the murmurous marble stair
To the king's palace.

He himself stood there
To meet them; knowing why they came; with eyes
Impatiently defiant of surprise.
But, when they set their burthen down before
The father of him murder'd whom they bore;
And, when the inward-moaning monarch flung
His body on the branchèd bier,—there hung
With murmurings meaningless, and dabbled vest
Soak'd in the dear blood sobbing from the breast
Of his slain son,—there, dragg'd along the flint
His bruisèd knees; and crush'd, beneath the print
Of passionate lips, groans choked in kisses close,
Pour'd idly on those eyelids meek, and those
White lips that aye such cruel coldness kept,
For all the hot love on them kist and wept;
And when the miserable wife, whom now
The sudden hubbub from the courts below
Had pierced to, thro' the swiftly-emptied house,
Flew forth, and, kneeling o'er her slaughter'd spouse,
Beat with wild hands her breast, and tore her hair,
And cried out, "Where, you unjust gods, O where,
Between the stubborn earth and stolid sky,
Was found the fault of my felicity?
That such a cruel deed should have been done
Under high heaven, beneath the pleasant sun!"
Then he, that was the cause of that wide woe,
Came forth before the corpse, and, kneeling low,
Stretch'd out sad hands to Crœsus; upon whom

He call'd, to execute the righteous doom
Of death on him, deserving life no more.

When, therefore, Crœsus heard this, he forbore
To groan against the edge of his own fate;
But judged most miserable that man's state
Who, evil meaning not, had evil done,—
First having slain his brother, then the son
Of him that gave him hospitality.
So, letting sink a slowly-soften'd eye
To settle on Adrastus, who yet knelt
Before him, his hard thoughts began to melt,
And he was moved in mind to tolerate
The greatness of his grief; which, being less great
Than his that caused it, stood in check, to make
This tolerable, too.
Sadly he spake:
"To me," he said, "thou hast requital made,
Most miserable man! on thine own head
Invoking death. Wherefore, I doom thee not.
Nor deem thy hand hath this disastrous lot
From the dark urn down-shaken. Rather, he,
That unknown god, whoever he may be,
That long ago foreshadow'd this worst hour,
Hath thus compell'd it to us. Some veil'd Power
Walks in our midst, and moves us to strange ends.
Our wills are Heaven's, and we what Heaven intends."
Then Crœsus caused to be upheaved foursquare

A mount of milk-white marble : and did there
In trophied urn the holy ashes heap
Of his loved Atys. And, that fame should keep
Unperish'd all the prince's early glory,
Large tablets wrought he, rough with this sad story.

But when the solemn-footed funeral,
With martial music, from the marble wall
Flow'd off, and fell asunder in far fields ;
And silenced was the clang of jostling shields,
And the sonorous-throated trumpet mute,
And mute the shrill-voiced melancholy flute ;
What time Orion in the west began
Over the thin edge of the ocean
To set a shining foot, and dark night fell ;
Then, judging life to be intolerable,
The son of Gordius sharply made short end
Of long mischance : and, calling death his friend,
He, self-condemn'd to darkness, in the gloom
And stillness, slew himself upon the tomb.
This to Adrastus was the end of tears.

But Crœsus mourn'd for Atys many years.

III.

GYGES AND CANDAULES.

(Herodotus i. 8.)

I.

O FOR the lute whereon Apollo play'd
At Love's own marriage! or the ecstatic string
That ransom'd thy too-soon-recaptured shade,
Renown'd Eurydice, from Hell's hard king!
O for one warbled strain of those that made
Ulysses long to leave his voyaging,
That in my song might now be felt and seen
The beauty rare of King Candaules' Queen!

II.

In old Mœonian Lydia, lord of all
Between the blue sea-floors and snowy brows
Of ancient Tmolus, where, by many a wall
Red with the bloom of ripe pomegranate boughs,
From bridge to bridge, the Golden Tide did fall
Thro' silken Sardis, with his bright-hair'd spouse
Dwelt that soft monarch, slave to her sweet eyes,
In gardens green 'neath costly canopies.

III.

For he was so enamour'd of his wife,
So sunk in love's soft sea without a shore,
That he no longer lived save in the life
Which her full-flowing loveliness did pour
On his dim passion: all his thoughts were rife
With her red kisses: ever he forbore
State business, and let all things fall asleep
That he might dream, and dream, of beauty deep.

IV.

There was no sweetness under the sweet sky
That to the heart-sick king was half so sweet
As all the languorous summer days to lie,
Faint as a fallen rose leaf, at her feet;
To loose his spirit o'er her in a sigh;
And feel, like sunny light and odorous heat,
The bounteous influence of her looks and lips,
And touchings fine of her faint finger-tips.

V.

And he would break from solemn council hall,
To breathe within the comfort of her face;
And he would steal from flaring festival,
To sit within her smile in private place;
And oft in midst of grave discourse would fall
To musing mute upon her matchless grace,
Then hurl wild words of passion into air,
Vaunting her perfect limbs and lustrous hair.

VI.

But oftenest he with Gyges would discuss
Her unimaginable excellence;
—Gyges, his friend, the son of Dascylus,
A man in honour, and of soberest sense
To disapprove the over-garrulous
Ill-counsell'd king; whom he, with deference,
Rebuked not seldom, pacing pleasant hours
Among the palace halls and garden bowers.

VII.

Yet this Candaules, in his foolishness,
(Mad as a man foredoom'd to misery!)
Was anger'd that his friend should aye repress,
With slant cold speech, his fervid ecstacy.
And once he said "But you would wonder less,
Since man's ear is less credulous than his eye,
That I so boast the beauty of my Queen,
If you her unrobed whiteness once had seen."

VIII.

But Gyges cried "Forbid it, gods on high,
That I should see a sight to shame my king!
For woman's robe is woman's modesty.
Surely, a man should only heed the thing
Which only him concerns. And therefore I,
That would my Queen to no dishonour bring,
This wisdom from the words of sages spell:
'Let no man wish what is to no man well.'"

IX.

This Gyges answer'd; and for evermore,
Fearing lest harm unto himself should be,
The foolish king with cautious words forbore;
But evermore the foolish king, for he
Was as a man the Nymphs have frenzied, swore
That his too-much-mistrusting friend should see
The thing he would not. Therefore he replied
"Have thou no fear lest mischief hence betide.

X.

"Her shalt thou see, thyself by her unseen;
For in the purple draperies of the door,
By night, what time the unsuspecting queen
Lone, as her wont is when our cups flow o'er,
Moves to the nuptial couch, behind the screen
Of broider'd Tyrian that is drawn before
The inner portal, thou, close-hid, shalt see
Her smooth-limb'd beauty breathing bare to thee.

XI.

"Fast by the royal couch for ever stands,
Under a silver lamp, a golden chair;
And, when she comes, she with her own white hands
Lays down her light of gorgeous garments there;
And smoothly slips from out their jewell'd bands
Her lustrous shoulders; and beams shining fair
In the amazèd mirror, ere is slid
Her snowy sweetness 'neath the coverlid."

XII.

Then Gyges, when he found not any way
The monarch's mad design to set aside,
With groaning heart prepared him to obey,
Tho' cursing deep his king's unkingly pride.
And, when night came, from out the banquet they
With guilty steps, like stealthy ghosts, did glide
Thro' wondering chambers dim with woven dyes,
And listening lengths of empty galleries.

XIII.

Thus to the nuptial chamber did they steal.
And in the portal's purple curtains there
The king himself did Gyges close conceal,
And bade him watch behind the golden chair
Whereby the queen her beauty should reveal.
Then to the banquet back, without a care,
Went King Candaules, pleased with folly done;
And Gyges with his thoughts was left alone.

XIV.

And first self-scorn shut all his sullen sense
Within himself: but soon the odours sweet,
Stream'd from the misty lamps, and that intense
Rich-scented silence, seeming to entreat
Some sound to ease its sumptuous somnolence,
Lured out his thoughts, and made his pulses beat
With wondrous expectation. The dim place
Seem'd aching to be filled up by her face.

XV.

Meanwhile, the music out of distant halls
Humm'd like the inland sound of hid sea-shores,
And ghostly laughters lapsed at intervals
Along the faint-lit cold-wall'd corridors;
And portals oped and shut, and then footfalls
That wander'd near, and, over other floors
To other silence, wander'd off again,
Kept up continual throbbing in his brain.

XVI.

At length, deep-down the opposing gallery,
From out the long-drawn darkness flash'd a light;
And, peering from his purple privacy,
He spied, with red gold bound and robed in white,
Sole as the first star in a sleepy sky,
That, while men watch it, grows more large and bright,
The slow queen sweeping down the lucid floor;
And in her hand a silver lamp she bore.

XVII.

Before her, coming, floated a faint fear
Into his heart who watch'd her whiteness move
Swan-soft along the lamp-lit marble clear,
And, lingering o'er her in the beams above,
The wing'd and folded shadow shift and veer,
Her airy follower, fraught with fretful love.
Thro' all his shaken senses rose vague heat
From the sweet sounding of her sandall'd feet.

XVIII.

Anon, she enter'd, and her lamp down-laid
By the smooth-metall'd mirror; and awhile
Stood, slanting low the glory of her head,
And dipp'd her full face in its own warm smile;
Then look'd she sidelong thro' one loosen'd braid
Of her rich hair, as tho' she would beguile
Some love-sick spirit on the air to linger,
Twining a gold curl round her glowing finger.

XIX.

But soon she all that twisted gold outshook,
Till over either shining shoulder stream'd
The sudden splendour; and began to unhook
From those white slopes the buckled gems that beam'd
Deep in the mirror's kindling dark, which took
Her mellow image to itself, and gleam'd
With soft surprises, and grew bright and warm
With the delicious phantom of her form.

XX.

Her Gyges watch'd, as one that helpless hears
The cataract call him downward. His heart made
Such passionate pealing in his flutter'd ears,
That by his fear he fear'd to be betray'd.
And, but that ever greater with his fears
His raptures grew, he had not so long stay'd;
But, having stay'd so long, he still must stay,
And, having look'd, he may not look away.

XXI.

Last, she with listless long-delaying hand
The golden sandals loosed from her white feet,
And loosed from her warm waist the golden band.
The milk-white tunic slided off its sweet
Snow-surfaced slope, and left half bare her bland
Full-orbèd breast. But, in the fainting heat
Of his bewilder'd heart and fever'd sight,
Here Gyges in the curtain groan'd outright.

XXII.

She started, as a Nymph of Dian's train,
Surprised, when bathing blithe in forest pool,
By some chance-straggler from the purple plain,
Ere she, quick-flashing thro' the fern-fringed cool,
Her golden darts can from the green weed gain,
Wherewith to pierce the rash low-fronted fool;
And where he cower'd, she, in superb surprise,
Levell'd the lustres of her angry eyes.

XXIII.

Then, more with wrath than shame, from breast to brow
Each snowy surface pass'd to rosy red,
The rosy redness pass'd again to snow;
Scornful she sprang into the purple bed,
And plunged her globed and gleaming limbs below
Their silken-fringèd sheath. Forth Gyges fled,
As from the god profaned some mad wretch flies,
Stricken and scorch'd, beneath indignant skies.

XXIV.

All down the hollow gallery, after him
The loud stones shouted at his heels: behind
The unseen Fury, sailing fast thro' dim
And dreadful space, breathed like a burning wind
Upon his hair: swift fire in every limb
Seeth'd up and down: night's blackness broke and shined
All round with restless eddyings of the glare
Of that strong vision, flooding the hot air.

XXV.

Nor did he, chased by stony echoes, mark
The silly-smiling king, with tumbled wreath,
Stretch hands wine-stain'd to stay him in the dark,
And waft wild whispers thick on heated breath
To win him back. More desperate than the bark
Unrudder'd in the storm, and blind as death,
He rush'd to waste himself in some unknown
Mad morrow, from that wicked midnight grown.

XXVI.

But when at last clear-crested Dawn upbroke
The seeming-endless trouble of that night,
And Gyges out of sleepless dream half woke
To wonder at himself, and loathe the light,
And groan beneath the unaccustom'd yoke
Of wrong recall'd, whilst yet on his sick sight
Swam floating gleams of all that glory seen,
And the wish'd image of the much-wrong'd Queen,

XXVII.

Even then, whilst smouldering fancy strove, like flame
Choked under kindled weeds, some rainy night
Leaves moist at morn, a sudden summons came
From her whose eyes still scorch'd him. Oh what might
Of dreadful dearness now was in that name,
To mingle sick dismay with mad delight,
And, oh, with what shamed knowledge now must he
Loathe to be seen by whom he longs to see!

XXVIII.

Unconscious by what power his powerless feet
Were moved within the light of her deep eyes,
He sank beneath them, smitten by the heat
Of their slow scorn; and, pour'd in agonies
Upon the pavement, did not dare to meet
Looks that grew large and larger, to comprise
The slowly-widening circle of some doom
That deepen'd ever in their sultry gloom.

XXIX.

Long while she spake not; and thro' every limb
He felt the silence straining at his heart;
Whilst her remorseless eye, still searching him,
Went to its aim like a dividing dart:
But still faint nearness to the fragrant rim
Of her warm robe dissolved his inmost smart
In dear delight, and still in sumptuous dread
Swift lives of joy seem'd dying. Then she said:

XXX.

"Rise! and remember that thou *wast* a man,
Tho' most unmanly hast thou shamed in thee
Earth's universal manhood. Dare to scan
The monstrous measure of thy wrong to me,
Then find whatever expiation can
Make life not all intolerable. We
Are made one shame together. I that bear,
And thou that didst, this wrong, this wrong must share."

XXXI.

But he, that long'd into her arms to leap,
And, lost in too-completed life, die there,
Swift as a fountain flashes from the deep
Up into sudden sunshine and sweet air,
Sprang, shivering, to his height; and, from its steep
And restless poise 'twixt rapture and despair,
His long-pent passion overflow'd, and he
His full heart, gushing into speech, set free.

XXXII.

Then, when he flung into fierce words and few
Recital of the monarch's mandate base,
Wherewith he strove, and strove in vain, there grew
Strange anguish in the changes of her face.
"Enough it seem'd," so moan'd she, "when I knew
Myself, tho' most unmeriting disgrace,
The fool of outrage. Must a husband's name
Stay ever at the summit of my shame?

XXXIII.

"Yet, half, my knowledge of the king divined
In last midnight's intolerable deed
The ignominious madness of his mind.
And, but that nature would so sharply plead
With that unnatural thought, all human kind
(For such wide warrant such wild wrong must need!)
Of human kindness had seem'd emptied quite,
Since love could in such loathly deed delight.

XXXIV.

"For thou hast seen what, so to have been seen,
Leaves an eternal blush between us twain.
My blood yet burns where'er thine eyes have been:
And insult unavenged in every vein
Makes memory mad. Me miserable Queen!
Where shall I turn? To whom do I complain?"
"Nay but," said Gyges, "injured Beauty's child,
Indignant Love, slew him whose gaze defiled

XXXV.

His mother's image. That wrong-doer lives
No more in me, that am Love's votary all!"
"Yea, so?" she answer'd. "But the king survives,
And this round base of earth is made too small
To hold such shameless husbands with shamed wives.
The very stones beneath men's heels will call
Disgrace on things so graceless, and express
Scorn of this king of all unkingliness!

XXXVI.

"But words waste anger weakly. Therefore choose :
There is no room beneath the all-circling sun
For me, and thee, and him, wherein to lose
The knowledge of the thing which hath been done.
Wherefore to us nought rests but to refuse
To live ourselves, or not let him live on.
Judge thou for both. Die, and I follow thee :
Or, slaying him, live on sole lord of me."

XXXVII.

She ceased with a long sigh ; and look'd, less scorn
Than sad self-pity, and dejection deep,
Lowering faint eyelids over eyes forlorn.
But Gyges cried "O that the tomb should keep
In that oblivious night, which hath no morn
To call obstruction cold from senseless sleep,
The silenced sweetness of so fair a face,
And no breath leave of all its breathing grace !

XXXVIII.

"Or that those lustrous limbs should ever fade
To fleeting shadow by the lampless shore
Of Orcus, or that lovely form be laid
In urnèd ashes to be seen no more !
But might the half of this dear debt be paid
By hecatombs of lives and seas of gore,
And had the king a hundred lives to lose,
To reach thee thro' them all I still must choose !"

XXXIX.

She mused a little; and her intricate eyes,
Orb within orb, grew dark with cruel light.
Then she said slowly "On the place he dies
Where he design'd dishonour yesternight.
But we must risk no rescue, hear no cries;
Sleeping, we slay him swiftly. Briefest fight
With fate is safest counsel. That must be
This night. The headless kingdom falls to thee,

XL.

"To thee whatever rests of woman here
Not made the food of Furies such as rise
From deeds like this. And so, from year to year,
We two must learn to bear each other's eyes;
Nay, cling the closer to shut out pale Fear,
And smother Horror up in Love's disguise.
For never now for us, ah never more
Love's chaste auroras! Dewy dawn is o'er.

XLI.

"This sun of passion, fed with guilty fire,
Leaps blood-red from the womb of blackest night.
Yet call it lovely names! I must desire
Thy love, and love thee, ay in scorn's despite!
Since my hate help of thy hate doth require.
It were less base to be united quite
Than in this shameful nearness to remain,
One in dishonour, tho' in honour twain.

XLII.

"So kiss this crime off!" Suddenly she fell,
A blinding gush of beauty upon his breast.
Thereafter all day long, in surge and swell
Of whirling thoughts, he chased his own unrest
About wild places, till heaven's purple bell
Was dropt with stars, and redden'd round the west;
Then in dark precincts, where the palace shone
New-lit, he paced the impatient hours alone.

XLIII.

Ere midnight, thro' the dusky doors he slid,
Drawn like an evil dream adown the dark;
And in the penetralian purples hid
His wicked knife, and crouch'd where he might mark
The stealthy signal, which his steps should bid
To their bad goal; and soon from slumber stark
The King's hard breathing on the silence spread,
And the Queen beckon'd from the treacherous bed.

XLIV.

There, bent beneath the winking lamp, those two,
With hearts hard-edged as was their glittering knife,
The senseless King in silken slumber slew,
And, with no moan, from his misusèd life
He fleeted down to Orcus. Then they drew
The dead reluctant weight, thro' silence rife
With horror, o'er the soak'd and slippery floor,
And dropp'd the blood-red ruin at the door.

XLV.

So died Candaules, slain for deed obscene :
So sunk the race of the Heraclidæ :
So Gyges took the kingdom and the Queen :
So wrong was heap'd on wrong, till Fate should be
Accomplish'd. But, by Heaven's high Justice seen,
Not unjudged went the deed. For when, to free
The realm from that usurping hand, men rose,
And shook the throne, and added woes to woes,

XLVI.

The god at Delphi sentence strict proclaim'd :
That crown and queen to Gyges should belong,
Since queen and crown the murder'd King had shamed ;
Albeit, because wrong is not heal'd by wrong,
Therefore sharp retribution Fate had framed
Far in the folded years, and curses strong
To plague the canker'd brood as yet unbred
From the base getting of that guilty bed.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II.

THANATOS ATHANATOU.

"That was enough which long ago, while we were yet at Carthage, Nebridius used to propound, at which all we that heard it were staggered :—'That said nation of darkness which the Manichees are wont to set as an opposing mass over against Thee, what could it have done unto Thee, hadst Thou refused to fight with it? For if they answered, "It would have done Thee some hurt," then shouldst Thou be subject to injury and corruption : but if it could do Thee no hurt, there was no reason brought for Thy fighting with it; and fighting in such wise as that a certain portion or member of Thee, or offspring of Thy very Substance, should be mingled with opposed powers and natures not created by Thee, and be by them so far corrupted and changed to the worse, as to be turned from happiness to misery, and need assistance whereby it might be extricated and purified ; and that this offspring of Thy Substance was the soul, which, being enthralled, defiled, corrupted, Thy Word, free, pure, and whole, might relieve ; that Word Itself being still corruptible, because It was of one and the same Substance. So then, should they affirm Thee, whatsoever Thou art, that is, Thy Substance, whereby Thou art, to be incorruptible, then were all these sayings false and execrable ; but, if corruptible, the very statement shewed it to be false and revolting.' "—*Confessions of S. Augustine*, B. VII. (ii.) 3.

"I set now before the sight of my spirit, the whole creation, whatsoever we can see therein (as sea, earth, air, stars, trees, mortal creatures ;) yea, and whatever in it we do not see, as the firmament of heaven, all angels moreover, and the spiritual inhabitants thereof." . . . "And I said, Behold God, and behold what God hath created . . . both Creator and created, all are good. Whence, then, is Evil?" —*Idem.* (v.) 7. "O Truth who art Eternity ! and Love who art Truth ! and Eternity who art Love !"—*Id.* (x.)·16.

THANATOS ATHANATOU.*

The Ninth Hour—Darkness over Calvary.

VOICES FROM ABOVE.

How long, O Lord, our God?

VOICES FROM BENEATH.

O Lord, how long?

[*A pause.*

VOICES FROM ABOVE AND BENEATH.

No answer yet?—Woe! woe! no answer yet!

SPIRITS (*sinking*).

Wild in the windless dark, what sullen song
Rolls this way from the waste? Our wings be wet
With dismal dews, bloody and salt.

SPIRITS (*rising*).

The strong

* The Latin rhymes with which this poem is interspersed have not been introduced whimsically, but as the simplest means of giving to monastic sentiment a language plainly distinguishable from that of the other utterances amongst which the voice of it is here occasionally audible.

Grief o' the grey old Earth these drops doth sweat.
The moan of old Earth's wrong
Mounts: and we mount with it.

A VOICE FROM THE EARTH.

I have nourish'd my numbers of nations
On a hope that hath never been blest:
And the ghosts of my gone generations
Vex me yet with reproachful unrest.
Worn by long unrequited endeavour,
As I roll thro' my ages of pain,
I have listen'd, I listen for ever,
For a word that is waited in vain!

AN ECHO.

In vain!

VOICE FROM THE EARTH.

In temple and palace
The bread and the chalice,
Bitter with brotherless pride,
Are eaten and drunken by Murder and Malice
Crown'd, mitred, and mantled, and magnified,
While brute-born Hunger, in hovel and den,
Is smiting and biting the bones of men

In whose bodies their souls have died.
One Misery goeth in gold :
And one Misery goeth acold :
And there is no difference beside,
However their dust be drest :
For the flourishing Evil is sad,
Because it is Evil at best :
And the fading Good is not glad,
Because it is Good opprest :
And their wretchedness knoweth no rest
From a hope that is ever belied
In a blessing not ever possest.
The children cry at the birth,
Buds cursing a canker'd stem !
Shall they live or die ? What strength have I,
The mother of miseries, Earth,
To bear, or to bury them ?
From pitiless city to city,
Passion hath hunted Pity :
Love feedeth his funeral pyre
On the flame of his own heart's fire :
My altars gurgle with groans,
Soak'd black are my temple stones
With the blood of my whitest ones.
Surely, surely O Lord,
It is time to utter the word,
And deliver Thyself, and Thy sons.

AN ECHO.

Deliver Thyself and Thy sons!

VOICES FROM HUMANITY.

Tristis nostra est conditio:
Qui parentis, ab initio,
Protoplasti vim in vitio,
Dum spiramus, propagamus
Usque ad finem hominum.
Nec suplicio nec exitio
Nostra subtrahit petitio
Multum quidem nos luentes,
Ob parentes, heu! solventes
Dirum debitum hominum.
Prima mali labes crescit:
Unde hominum marcescit
Genus omne. Sicut fumus
Fugit dies. Ægri sumus:
Cor humanum nihil corrigit:
Nemo nobis manum porrigit:
Quin et etiam vincit fortis
Inexpletæ hasta mortis
Dominorum Dominum.

VOICES FROM THE GRAVE.

Of yesterday's joy and its sorrow,
Of the hopes and the fears of to-morrow,
Of misery, madness, and mirth,

Of the bright and the sable spheres
Where the treasures of space are stored,
Of the wonderful world they engirth,
Azure-roof'd, emerald-floor'd,
Of the monuments Memory rears,
And Pride, with a gory sword,
Graves, forging the name of Worth,
Of the scrolls of singers and seers
With the words of promise scored,
Words written to lull the pain
Of Doubt, from Doubt's dictating,
We have sought, and sought again,
The meaning of Life and of Birth
We have waited—waited in vain,
For an answer, a token, a word;
Waited—waited for years,
Waiting, weeping, and waiting,
Till Death, to be rid of our tears,
Hid us under this handful of earth,
Where still the old hopes, the old fears,
Wait in vain for an answer, O Lord.

AN ECHO.

Answer, O Lord!

A VOICE FROM THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

Mortui non laudabunt te,
Neque in infernum

Qui descendunt, Domine !
Exibit nam spiritus :
Revertetur animus
Subter humum. Venit hora :
Sistit opus : silent ora :
Non auditur vox clamantis :
Non respondet cor amantis :
Et amores et labores
Periiunt in eternum !

A VOICE FROM THE SEA.

Slave of the Spirit of Might
Have I been in my own despite,
For ages, and ages;
But a memory yet of a ruin'd right
To a something lost of divine delight
Thro' my mid-inmost rages
For ages, for ages !
I have struck with a struggling shoulder
The sides of this stubborn star,
Till old promontories, older
Than its oldest memories are,
Began to crumble and moulder
And drop under my prison bar.
I have tumbled my sands and shells
Over cities and citadels;
Thro' ages and ages,
Ever moving, moaning ever;

Ever seeking, finding never,
Answer to the deep endeavour
Of the spirit that in me dwells,
Which no rest assuages
Thro' ages and ages.
With the voice of my waves and storms
I have question'd the million forms
That float in the molten thunder,
And drop with a voice of wonder
Down the red-litten
Ruin-smitten
Hollow and hissing dark,
When 'tis suddenly, terribly, torn asunder
By the leap of the lightning-spark :
My voice the sun's mid noon,
My voice the midnight moon,
By whose silver sceptre cold
With strong moanings manifold
Are my wishful waters drawn,
Long hath heard ; and the white Dawn ;
And the wistful Even, too ;
What time round his pavilion
Of blue, amber, and vermilion,
He, with a stealthy finger
That doth ever love to linger,
Softly disengages
From out their azure cages,
To float in fervid heights,

All those wingèd lights
That soar on winking pinions,
Of white fire, and wander thro'
Their newly-gain'd dominions
Of divinest blue;
Still lifted up, long ages,
Still vainly, to enquire
(For man, whose mind makes choice
Of mine, to be the voice
Of his own pining pain)
Wherefore infinite desire
Finite power doth enchain?
But, unanswer'd by the ages
Wherewith man's passion wages
Weary war, that doth but tire,
Waste, and break him, I again
To the sorrow of his sages
Fling their question back; in vain
Forced upon me; never nigher
To the knowledge they would gain
Of the meaning of man's pain.

AN ECHO.

Pain!

VOICES FROM THE AIR.

Hourly in a crystal cup
Do we Spirits gather up
The sounds of all the sorrows

Of the yesterdays and morrows
Of man's measured misery.
But never yet, O Lord,
Have we ever heard
On Sorrow's lip the word
That might set Sorrow free.

AN ECHO FROM THE ÆONS.

Set Sorrow free!

A VOICE ON CALVARY.

Himself, that saved others, let him save!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Thou, if thou be the Son of God, come down!

AN ECHO FROM GEHENNA.

Son of God, come down!

A MULTITUDE OF VOICES.

Art thou a Prophet? Prophesy, we crave,

A MULTITUDE OF ECHOES.

Prophesy, we crave!

THE VOICES.

What thorns mean in thy crown.

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE.

Put forth thy strength now, Thou that wouldest burst

The doors of my dominion! Doth the First
Daunt thee? The Second Death is yet. The worst
Hath evermore a worse beyond.

A VOICE FROM THE CROSS.

I THIRST!

VOICES BELOW THE CROSS.

Mix the hyssop with the myrrh!

DÆMONS OF THE OUTER DEEP.

A cup of deadly wine
Be it ours to minister
To a thirst divine!
We are the Cruelties of Nature,
That swarm to overwhelm
The spirit in the creature
That invades her realm.
Horror, stolen from the lips
Of the livid-faced eclipse;
Terror, from the scorch'd earth under
The swift transit of the thunder;
Wrath from the enormous ocean;
Madness from the earthquake's motion:

DÆMONS OF THE INNER DEEP.

Pallid fears, heart-harrowing cares,
From invincible night-mares;

And the stealthy day-by-day
Of what turns men's hair to grey;
And the sudden, sharp collapse
Of Courage, when the vast Perhaps
Springs at unawares in sight;
And the whisper in the night
That breaks a noble heart:

OF THE OUTER DEEP.

Deep awe
From the abysses: vulture's claw,
Serpent's fang, and scorpion's sting,
Tiger's tooth, and dragon's wing:
All that's hideous and unholy
Mix we here, to make the wine
Of our mighty melancholy,
Meet for lips divine.

TOGETHER.

Fleshly pang, and ghostly woe:
Let him drain it! Let men know
What of God's Divinity
Dwells in Man's Humanity!

DÆMONS OF THE OUTER DEEP.

Weave the web of agony,
Softly! softly and silently
Wind the web of agony
Round about his heart!

Delicately let it lie
On the spirit and the eye,
Mesh'd with finest misery,
  And in every part
Strung, by choicest cruelty,
  Strong with subtlest smart!
Draw the tightening threads together,
  Stronger each than adamant,
Lighter each than powdery feather
  Fall'n upon the florid plant
Where, all faint from fervid ether,
  To his inmost honied haunt
Summer's fond and wanton rover,
  The fine-wingèd moth doth creep.
Let the film of anguish hover
  O'er his senses, like the sleep
Of sick fear that settles over
Stifled lands in lurid weather,
When, beneath, pent earthquakes gather
  Forces for a sudden leap!
Let him break it, if he can,
And reveal the God in Man!

DÆMONS OF THE INNER DEEP.

Thro' and thro' the strangling weft,
Drive the knife home to the heft!
Turn it in his inmost heart!
Turn it! Let him feel the smart

Of the sharpness of the whole
Of the iron in the soul!
Let him bear it, if he can,
And avenge the God in Man!

TOGETHER.

Probe the wound unto the core!
Burn and bite into the bone!
Prove we, if this man be more
Than the men that went before,
And were swiftly overthrown.
Let him feel it all he can,
Feel as God may feel for Man:
Fleshly pang, and ghostly woe!
It is fit that men should know
What of God's Divinity
Dwells in Man's Humanity!

THE VOICE OF SATAN ON THE HEIGHTS.

Make good thy double title, Son of Man,
Or Son of God! If Son of God thou beest
More than all other sons of man that be,
Then is thy solitary deed, tho' done
In man's disguise, not man's: whose life remains
No loftier and no lovelier than before
His flesh was filch'd to test the transient play
Of a god's power which, tho' in him put forth,
Leaves man's self helpless as that hollow heap

Of trophied harness from whose lifeless clutch
Some passionate hero plucks the brand, to prove
How living hands may wield it. Son of God
If thou beest only but as all men be,
Then, more than all men can thou canst not. Named
By either title,—son of Man or God,—
I do defy thee, by surpassing pangs,
To snatch from me my old supremacy
In sorrow, my Divinity of Pain.
Vainly with me in misery dost thou vie,
Prophet of Pity!—whom I pity most,
That thou should'st deem it possible to force
Far recompense from transient torment spent
On what thou addest to a million more
And mightier woes,—or, that oblivious Time,
Who, as he marches, all behind him burns,
Will halt his wasteful course, to count and keep
(Once dropt into the measureless abyss
Of anguish, and the homelessness of things)
The few red drippings of that dolorous brow.
Why, how now, O mine Enemy? Behold!
There is not one of thy lost children here,—
Thy children by lost heritage in Hope,
Mine by adoption and the curse of Sin,—
There is not one of these that hath not groan'd
Beneath some throe as sharp as at this hour
Racks the God in thee! Count the ages up
By all their aching pulses, and consider

What power is thine,—even to contemplate
The congregated anguish and despair,
Grim ignorance, wrath, execration, fierce
Brute wrongs, and purblind drudging wretchedness,
The heart-broken memory, the trampled hope,
The slow, cold, suffocating creeping care,
The cankering doubt, choked longing, livid hate,
The stabbing shame, the stark, gaunt, naked need,
The weary struggle of the strangled will,
The whirling frenzy, and the wild regret,
The dim, inexplicable shapeless dread,
The intense torture unendurable,
The sick self-loathing, and the crusht revolt
Of the excruciated flesh—all, all
The myriad miseries cramm'd into the curse
Not of man only, but of all that lives:
Whose several sufferings, separate discontents,
And special curses, are summ'd up in man,
As man's in me, that of man's miseries all
Am the unanswer'd Protest against Him
That made us what, for being, we are plagued:
From puling infancy to pining youth,
From life's mid fever to its last faint gasp,
From the worm trodden by the heedless foot
To the man broken by the heavy years
He staggers under, or else caught and crusht
By the strong sudden hand in the first fray,
And trampled by his fellows: Fate's blind fool

Upon whose borrow'd image he himself
Now wreaks the rabid fury of his race
Rear'd into endless enmity with all
That to upraise it doth in vain aspire.
What I endure,—I call, to testify,
All creatures, and all things inanimate,
Which are as pasture to my pain. Respond
From your abysses and sublunar haunts,
From viewless dens, or public paths of pain,
In earth, or air, or sea,—whatever creeps
Or flies, or swims, or with inanimate woe
Makes inarticulate protest,—blighted growths,
Canker'd, corrupted, curst!—ye prisoners all
That populate this penitential star,
And know my voice! thou ocean, from thy deeps
Where Desolation dwells, thou realm of air
Whereof I am the prince,—and all ye winds
That waft and mock the moanings of the world,—
Thou ancient earth,—and all ye habitants
Of this old lodge of anger!—Listen God!

AN INORGANIC VOICE.

I suffer!

ORGANIC VOICES.

And we suffer!

HUMAN VOICES.

And we suffer!

SATAN.

Enough! Ye suffer for my sake, as He
Suffers for yours, and suffering hath no end!
Thou Lord of Love, dost thou these voices hear?
What are thy pangs to those which these endure,
And have endured for ages, and must yet
For ages more, moan under? Lord of Love
Thou knowest what Love can suffer, and no more!
But men were born to hate themselves, and thee:
Love is not of their nature. Dost thou deem
That any tear thou weepest can blot out
The curse that's scrawl'd across a universe
Condemn'd from the beginning to the end?
Few were thy mortal years, and counted soon:
In thine Immortal,—nothing! Short thy strife,
Soon quench'd its agony! Yet, if the thirst
Of this soul-parching Hour might drain the dregs
Of all the tears of all the centuries,
Lost were thy labour! For, if man thou art,
More than all men have done thou canst not do;
But more than all must fail, who more than all
Hast dared. If thou beest God, why then, as God,
Conquer thou canst: but in that conquest, man,
That hath no part, can no more profit claim
Than some poor savage, in a barbarous isle
Half brutish born, could boast of, did he know
That otherwhere, in Athens or in Rome,

Some being, like himself, of woman born,
Form'd, like himself, of flesh and blood, like him
Mortal, hath learn'd the lore of Samian seers,
Or won the Cæsar's crown. God's strength is god's:
Man's at the best, can be but man's; who fails
Tho' God, as God, succeed: and thy success
(If thou succeedest) is not man's, but His
Whose power, in thee, is but superfluous proof
Of a foregone conclusion. Man, or God,
If man, hope nothing to man's hope denied,
If God, tho' thou God's conquest claim, I claim
Man's failure: most in thee: who mock'st him most
With what he might be, if, like thee, he had
A god's strength in him, by a god's will plied.

A VOICE FROM THE CROSS.

WHEREFORE, MY GOD, HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

[*A pause.*

INORGANIC VOICES.

Is God no longer in Humanity?
Then masters of Man's godless world are we,
Peopling its pale impersonality.

EVIL SPIRITS (*gathering*).

Darknesses, Silences, Strangenesses, waken!
Ye, that forsake not whom God hath forsaken,
Take the Untaken!

THE SILENCES.

By the sweetness of music slain
Is the soul of our silence fed
On a pang surpassing sound.

THE DARKNESSES.

And our darkness' dearest gain
By the ghost of a glory dead
With a sharper shade is crown'd.

THE DEEDLESS ONES.

From the lonesome places,
Unseen, untrod,
Where no life traces
In seed or sod
The love that chases
The steps of God;

THE DEFEATED ONES.

From the twilights sunk in the nether dens,
Where Madness and Death are denizens;
From the wildernesses of wasted dreams,
Where pale-faced Failure strays, and feeds
Her footless flocks by the frenzied streams
Of desires dragg'd down among broken deeds;
From the shipless shore where no bird flies,
But old wrecks choke the sobbing tide,

And the stranded wretch, that beheld our eyes
Where the storm-wave cast him, crazed and died;
From the red high road to the sudden end,
Which the blood of its lone wayfarer streaks,
Who, dogg'd by the fear of himself, doth wend
Till the suicide findeth the knife he seeks;
From the flint-bound cells, where a strong heart breaks
When the maniac's chain in his last gasp shakes;
Where from milkless nipples unmated mothers
Pluck the nameless babes the unblest earth smothers,
And the Memories God remembers not
In the charnel houses of Hope do rot;

TOGETHER.

We come! we come!
In the frustrate strife
Of the vanquisht life,
On the course misrun
To the goal unwon
By the faith, self-cheated
Of the deed defeated,
To claim our home.

DENOUNCING VOICES.

Thus far rose the race of man,
Thus low doth it lie.
Worlds that in man's faith began
In man's failure die.

EVIL SPIRITS OF THE HEIGHTS (*descending*).

The plain we have left unmolested
Where low things low lie, still.
The dust in the dust lay, and rested
Where the wind had wreak'd on it his will;
Tho' the plumes of the purple-crested
Thunder throbb'd on the hill.
For what can be done, or undone,
With the filth that is filth for ever?
So we spared our pain
To ruin the plain,
And, leaving it safe in its baseness alone,
Made wing for the higher endeavour.
It is but an atom of earth,
A grain, a speck most small;
But the place of it gave it worth,
For this summit was highest of all.
So for ages and ages long
We Spirits had no such bliss
As to watch, with our eyes upon it,
Waiting to do it wrong:
Since the devil had need of this.
And, lo you! at last we have won it.
A grain,—no more: but it grew
Where all things fall if it fall.
A speck: but a summit too,
—The highest summit of all!

EVIL SPIRITS OF THE DEPTHS (*ascending*).

In the deepest deeps of Night
Swam the star of a far off day.
A Spirit in bondage there,
Chain'd fast to the sullen slope,
Sat watching the lonesome ray
Of that star's incertain light,
With an agonising stare.
Let him grieve and grope as he may
Henceforth, that Spirit blind,
Whose name, not Patience now,
Shall by men be call'd Despair;
But he never again shall find,
However he grieve or grope,
'Neath Night's eternal Nay,
Any light on the deeps below.
For the star he was watching is Hope,
And that star we have stolen away.

DENOUNCING VOICES.

Tempters of the height,
Darkners of the deep,
Midway now unite,
Man from God to keep.
Thus far rose the race of man,
Thus low doth it lie.
All that in man's life began
In man's death doth die.

SPIRITS UNITING.

Where bare of sepulture
It hangs on the rock,
To the carcass the vulture
And eagle do flock:
Scenting the carrion,
The raven and kite
Follow the clarion,
And feast on the fight:
To his prey leaps the leopard:
The wolf on the lamb
That is left by the shepherd
His hunger doth cram:
Round the spent swimmer,
With eyes peering pale
Thro' the green glimmer
The lean shark doth sail;
The owlet by night spoils the nest in the tree:
The bat tears the moth: God, that seëth it done,
Sayeth never a word: as He made us are we:
And so seize we our own!

THE VOICES APPROACHING.

Ye that forsake not whom God hath forsaken,
Spirits of evil, awaken! awaken!
Shake the Unshaken!

SATAN.

Mine Enemy, could I accuse thee now

Hell from her deep foundations should send forth
A shout to shake the highest porch of Heaven
With most infernal thunder! Enemy,
Could I accuse thee, all the Potentates
Of Pain would rise to welcome to his throne
My peer in condemnation!
Harken all,
You sightless Essences that have no voice
Under the silence of Eternal God,
Till Nature cries—"Too late!"—and Hell responds
With all her echoes! You that spy on man,
Sit in his heart, and count its pulses up,
People the silent places of his mind,
And set your secret sign upon his thoughts,
Dog all his steps from wicked woes to woes,
Gather his deeds, and lay them in the lap
Of Accusation,—Destinies, and Fates,
Dooms, Witnesses, Informers against man,
Angels of Reprobation!—you that keep
The record-book of wrongs for future wrath,
Accusers all,—that are my ministers,
As I am God's—in Hate, not Love—attend!
Answer me, now, What fault is in this man?

VOICES.

We find not any fault within this Man.

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

Within this Man not any fault is found!

ECHO FROM THE ABYSS OF NATURE.

Fault is found.

VOICES FROM THE DEPTHS OF HUMANITY.

Is ours their fault who fail'd ere we began?
Born to the woes we wrought not, are we bound
By a plan we did not plan?

VOICES OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Woe to the offspring of the Fault of Man!
Woe!

ECHO FROM GEHENNA.

Woe, the offspring of the Fault of Man!

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL.

Dance we around! around!
Man hath forsaken God: God hath forsaken Man!
The sun is dark in heaven: there is no light from above:
We must be merry meanwhile,—merry as long as we can,
Tho' Nature is sick to the heart, and the Angels are
weeping for Love!
Hand in hand, a heedless band,
Round about the Tree,
Purple-gown'd, and golden-crown'd,

Merrily dance We Three !
One of us Three hath a cloven foot
That *will* peep out, whatever the boot
That Use or Wont may fashion to't ;—
Which of us can it be ?
One of us three hath a leering eye,
And a slippery step, and a parching sigh
On a red lip, draining men's hearts dry,—
And the Witch knows which it must be.
One of us three hath a royal gait,
And a heart of scorn, and a brow of hate,
And nath'less he lifteth his head elate
Tho' he looketh upon the Tree.
This is an ancient dance :
And long ago we danced it,
Round a god of another stamp :
In the heart of the Chosen Camp,
Heedless whatever the chance,
We danced it, and we pranced it,
With a mad and a merry tramp,
While nobody heeded what God said,
Tho' the thunder was talking overhead,
And the sun turn'd sick as a languish'd lamp
Whose last light sinks unfed.
With a merry song, and a merry laugh
Round about the Golden Calf,
We danced it all together,
And the populace, at as merry a pace,

High and low, all join'd the race,
In turban, robe, and feather :
Women, as mad as mad could be,
Little children, bare to the knee,
Priests and elders of high degree,
All in the stormy weather !

VOICES FROM BENEATH THE THRONE.

How long, O Lord, must we endure ? How long ?
Avenge the perfect patience of Thy Saints
Whose blood cries out o' the earth against Earth's Wrong.

A VOICE FROM THE EARTH.

Avenge not, God, thy Holy One on me,
Whose latest hope in His life's darkness faints.

VOICES FROM HADES.

Release, O Lord, Thy prisoners, that to Thee
Make moan, long-fetter'd in the bonds of Night,
Unransom'd captives of unconquer'd Sin !

SPIRITS IN THE BOSOM-OF-ABRAHAM.

Celestial Shepherd of the Flocks of Light,
Descend, descend the moaning deeps among,
And draw Thy lost sheep in !

THE VOICES IN HADES.

How long shall Darkness hide us, Lord? How long?
When shall the Dawn begin?

[*A pause.*

A MULTITUDE OF VOICES.

Alas! no answer yet!

VOICES OF ANGELS, WATCHING ROUND THE CROSS.

By the awe on Olivet,
By the darkness on the day,
By the earth that now is wet
With the blood of Him they slay
Knowing not,—by all the debt
Which Thy Son doth die to pay,
Lord, no more thine oath forget,
Nor Thy right hand stay!
Ransom, Lord, Thy quick and dead,
By the blood which now is shed
For them . . . .

A VOICE FROM THE CROSS.

IT IS FINISHÈD!

A VOICE FROM THE ABYSS OF NATURE.

Amen!

EVIL SPIRITS.

Haste! Away!

[*Thunder and earthquake.*

ANGELS, BEARING UP THE WORD.

Earth has heard, and Heaven hath heard,
And the Ever-living Lord,
What was utter'd doth record!
Caught upon the blacken'd lips
Of the lightning-seam'd eclipse,
Echoed by infernal thunder
From the earthquake groaning under,
Answer'd from the hearts of men
By a yet unvoiced Amen,
Bear we up the Word!

A VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE.

The Mystery of the Vail is rent! is rent!

EVIL SPIRITS DEPARTING.

Ariel! Ariel!
Thou Lion of the Lord armipotent,
Tried and invincible!

VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE.

The Mystery of the Vail is rent! is rent!

ANGELS IN AIR.

Ariel ! Ariel !
The covenant whereto He did assent
Our God hath disannull'd with Death and Hell.
Thou Lion of the Lord Omnipotent
In thee henceforth the heart o' the world shall dwell !

VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE.

The Mystery of the Vail is rent ! is rent !

ANGEL VOICES.

Ariel ! Ariel !

ELDERS BEFORE THE THRONE.

Blessing, blessing, and thanksgiving,
Glory, glory, rule and reign,
To the Dead One that is living,
The Death-slayer that was slain !
In the Life is sown the seed :
From the Death the fruit is wrought :
Beauty buried in the deed
Re-arises in the thought :
From the transitory Act,
Which shall perish with the past,
Springs the Faith, the Living Fact,
That for evermore shall last.
To the teaching of the Word,—

To the Utter'd Law,—succeed
Yet a Second and a Third.
First, the teaching of the Deed :
—Of the Deed, which is the Example,
In the Life which is the Love :
These ennoble and make ample
What to perfect and to prove,
(Heir of all) doth man inherit
Help of Him that cometh Third :
And the teaching of the Spirit
Shall complete the Deed and Word.
Amen ! blessing and thanksgiving.
Amen ! glory rule and reign
To the Slain One by the living
Of whose dying Death is slain !

A VOICE OUT OF THE SANCTUARY.

The earth doth quake,
But cannot shake
This corner stone of mine :
The steadfast stone,
The only one
That never shall be overthrown,
For, graved by God, doth shine
His Name thereon
That is the Son
Of God and Man ; whose Name alone
Is Human and Divine.

THE ELDERS ABOVE.

Amen! Amen! God that gazest
On Thine image in Man's Son!
Man that man to God upraisest,
Human and Divine in one!

SAINTS ARISING.

Sing ye, singing out of dust,
Buried Spirits of the Just,
For now i' the deadest dark of Death the light of Life doth shine.
We arise, each bidden guest,
From the chambers of our rest.
Open, Zion, open to us, all those solemn gates of thine!
A sound, a sound of voices, and of harpings, and a light
As when a great solemnity is holden in the night!
For the vintage of the vineyard, for the gathering of the vine!
And sing ye, and sing ye to the Lord a holy ditty:
The song that David sung to us upon the harp with might:
A vineyard, a vineyard, a vineyard of red wine!
The lord thereof is Lord of Life, whose love is infinite:
For deeper than the plummet drops in Him are depths of pity,
And in Him is mercy more than may be measured by the line,
And the judgment that is in Him is not reckon'd by the rod.

A VOICE FROM JERUSALEM.

Enter, ye Saints, into the Holy City!

VOICE OF A CENTURION.

Verily, this man was the Son of God!

VOICES OF ARISEN SAINTS (*growing fainter as they pass*).

Fire among the thorns that burnest!
Star that heaven around thee turnest!
Living star of love, whose light
From the breast of the Divine
Brightest glows in blackest night,
Down this human darkness shine!
Ignis inter spicula:
Umbrâ sidus in nocturnâ:
Jesu tibi sit superna
Gloria in sempiterna
Seculorum secula.
Voice the winds and waves obey!
Spirit summoning this clay!
Life-creative Word of God,
Trumpet whose triumphant breath
Calls the soul from out the clod,
And awakens life in death!
Audivere quos nox tegit;
Tremuitque gens infausta
Inter umbras; quæ mors regit
Fracta audivere claustra!

Hostage found we none to take
Death upon him for our sake.
Bondsmen of the Night, to Thee
Made we moan from under ground.
Thou, descending, didst set free
From their bonds the prison-bound.
Liberati sunt ligati,
Et soluti condemnati.
Ubi mors sedebat, ibi
Venit vita. Gloria tibi!
Dayspring, of whose light is born
Mortal life's immortal morn,
Thou from the Beginning wast
God with Very God alone:
Man, with very man, Thou hast
In the Flesh the Godhead shown.
Eque Deo Deus, numen
Verum tu de numine,
Et divinum vivens lumen
In æterno lumine.
To the right hand of the Father,
Where Thou sitt'st in glory, gather,
Out of darkness, death, and doom,
Son of God, the sons of men.
Shine upon us in the tomb,
Light us into life again!
Fac ut quando morietur
Corpus, nostræ sit victoria

Animæ. Fac ut donetur
Tecum paradisi gloria !

[*The voices die out in the passing of the eclipse—Evening falls, and moonlight, over Calvary.* JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, *the two* MARYS, *other Women, and Disciples, bearing away the body of* CHRIST.

Hush ! for the soldier's spear :
Hush ! for the high priest's scorn :
Hush ! lest the haters hear :
For we are sheep forlorn.
Dead is our shepherd dear,
Dead, and the wolves are near.
Hush ! lest we, too, be torn.
Brothers, tread light, breathe low :
With no loud voice of woe
Must the loved burthen we bear hence be borne.
Ah, that, of all for whom his blood did flow,
None left to mourn him be,
None left, save only we,
Alas, that left him once whom now we mourn,
And could not save him, tho' we loved him so !
Peace ! he hath died, but is not dead.
Stoop ! ere he lie in earthy bed
With crusht cassia strew,
For savour sweet, his winding sheet.
And, from his holy head and feet
Kiss off the cold death dew.
We will never more forsake him.

To our human hearts we take him :
In our human hearts we make him
A deep grave, that he,
Buried in our love and pain,
Thence may rise to live again
In the lives of ransom'd men
Whom he died to free.
Lord, until this Human die
Into Thy Divinity,
(So made wholly thine !)
Deep in our Humanity
(So made wholly ours !) shall lie
Buried Thy Divine !

VOICES OF ANGELS PASSING.

Blessèd are ye forlorn,
For whom The Lord is dead !
Rejoice all ye that mourn,
Ye shall be comforted !

[*The Mourners move down the hill with the body of* CHRIST. THE ANGEL OF THE WATCH *descends.*

THE ANGEL OF THE WATCH.

Peace upon earth ! Good will to men. All's well !

[SATAN *approaches.*

THE ANGEL.

Satan, I warn thee hence. Whence comest thou ?

SATAN.

From walking to and fro upon the earth.
Thou liest, Angel! Nothing here is well,
For I am here.

ANGEL OF THE WATCH.

Yet must thou hence.

SATAN.

"Must," Cherub?
I will not.

ANGEL OF THE WATCH.

Not thy will, nor mine, decides
Our places. Here, I guard the Cross of Christ.

SATAN.

I also. Hearken, Angel of the Watch!
Hath Sorrow any right unto this Cross?
If so, I claim it by my right in Sorrow.
Or Sin, thou Angel, hath it any right
Unto this Cross? Then, by my right in Sin,
I claim it. If not Sorrow, if not Sin,
What, then, hath rights upon this Cross? Not thou,
Nor all the hosts that share with thee God's joy;
For these He died not, and for these no cross
Was needed. Sorrow's place, and Sin's, is here.
Therefore my place is here, with Sin and Sorrow.

The body of thy lord, Humanity
Hath taken to itself. O I have heard
Those woman-wailings! Verily I have heard,
And laugh'd to think what sort of love was theirs
That sang of love so loudly!

Mark me, Angel!

Already I foresee, in the new time,
How men will crucify this Christ again
Daily and hourly, in their hours and days:
How they will crucify him in their faith,
As, in their doubt too, they will crucify him!
How, in their knowledge and their ignorance,
How in their love as in their hate, their hope
And their despair, their wisdom and their folly,
Still they will crucify him!

Enemy!

Thou knowest that the mind of man is warp'd
From the beginning of the world. Thou knowest
That men will choose the evil, not the good,
Their nature being evil, and the True
Still crucify, still crown the False, and still
Shape knowledge into ignorance.

Henceforth,

This stone of stumbling, where it falls, shall grind
All things to powder. Neither day, nor hour,
Shall pass, but what, disputing to the death
Thy substance, and thine elements, man's mind
Shall waste man's life about a wilderness

Of miserable, innumerable folly.
Pedants, and pedagogues, and busybodies,
Schools, councils, doctors, disputants, divines,
Shall stretch contentious hands to scribble still
Even as erewhile, their Hebrew, Greek, and Latin
Over thy murder'd head, and write thee wrong
In every language learn'd by Ignorance!
In thy name, men shall slaughter, and torment,
Desolate, ruin, and destroy each other!
In thy name, scaffolds shall be smear'd with gore;
In thy name, dungeons shall be cramm'd with groans;
The bloody whip, the branding-iron, the stake,
The faggot, and the sharp two-handed axe,
The torturing engine, and the toothèd wheel,
Shall owe thy name no lack of work to do.
In thy name, men shall brutalise God's gift
Of life, ill-comprehended, till they rot
Howling, or, mad with stupid silence, pass
Out of Humanity, to crawl to death,
Beast-like, thro' bestial filth, foul sores, and scum
Of self-neglect, in desert dens and holes!
In thy name, men shall utter blasphemies
Undream'd-of yet by devils damn'd in Hell!
In thy name, Fraud, and Force, and Violence
Shall prosper in the prejudice of all
That hath till yet made patience possible
Under huge wrongs! . . . . Till thou, mine Enemy,
The infinitely-often crucified,

Even in the heights of thy felicity
Yonder, and by the right hand of high God,
Shalt drain the cup of bitterness,—erewhile
Half-tasted only,—to so deep a depth
Of wrath and anguish, that thyself shalt curse
Thy new-adopted, even as they curse thee!
Meanwhile, my place is here, beside this Cross,
With Sin and Sorrow. Therefore stand aside,
Thou Angel of the Watch! Here will I rest.

ANGEL OF THE WATCH.

Angel of Accusation, here or elsewhere
Neither thy power, nor mine, prevails, but His
That suffers us,—each in his several sphere,
Me to obey, and thee to contradict,
And both to serve His purpose equally.
The meaning of thy mystery, and the end
Foreseen from the beginning, and foreseen
By wisdom infinite for endless good,
Thyself, thou knowest not. Neither do I know
The meaning of my own. Thou canst but view
The single act of God's eternity,
Which is to partial senses sensible
In partial action only, by the eye
Of thine own nature, as by mine I view it.
And, thy perception being limited
To evil only, to thee only evil

Is still perceptible, as still to me
Good only, and good everywhere.

SATAN.

Enough,
Angel, I know, at what I know to mock,
And marvel at this huge ado for that
Which, when 'tis done, is nothing,—or, at least,
Nothing in the diminishment of all
The misery and the wretchedness in man,
To which God said—"Encrease and multiply!"
The ages to the ages, and the hours
Unto the hours, shall add themselves, and men
Shall multiply, and ever with more men
More misery! Meanwhile, my place is here,
And here I stand,—beside this Cross of Christ;
Where Sin shall come, and Sorrow come with Sin,
And Sin and Sorrow still shall find me here,
Still ready to accuse them. And, when men
Shall learn, like thee, to talk theology
Most eloquently with the Devil himself,
Dispute with him his nature, proper place
And fit relation, in the latest plan
Of general self-complacency,—at least,
His presence shall they feel, as thou dost now,
Here, in the shadow of this Cross of Christ!

ANGEL OF THE WATCH.

Mocker! Scorn ever was the sign assured
Of impotency.

SATAN.

And of ignorance,
Such tearless self-complacency as thine.
Is man's praise challenged? Be man's right to blame
Thereby accorded! What is changed for man?
Or how is man's case better'd? What man was
He is, and shall be, and so must have been,
So being made. The mutable images
Of Good and Evil in the minds of men
May change from age to age. But man himself
No nearer and no farther than before
Stands, where he stood, between them. What man names
Evil to-day, to-morrow he names good:
And, contrary, what he names good to-day,
To-morrow he names evil. What of that?
He changes not his nature, but a name.
Good men, or men so call'd, have been ere now,
And evil men, or men so call'd, shall be,
In like proportion, to the end of time.
At one time this thing, at another that,
Man studies to become, and calls it good:
His power to be it, whatsoe'er it be,
Is thro' all time the same as it hath been;

In the strong somewhat, nothing in the weak,
Not much in any.
Cherub, know me. Prince
Of this world, thou hast heard it, am I called.
Prince of this world I am. But in this world
I have no power save on the mind of man;
Whereby whatever God for man made good
I for man turn to evil. Storm, eclipse,
Deluge, and the exterminating fire,
Earthquake, and pestilence—God's works, not mine—
Obey me not. But me my works obey,
Which are the fears these fashion in men's minds,
The fearful deeds which, thro' man's life, those fears
Shape themselves into. Look on me. I am
Man's mind's eternal protest against Law,
—Man's life's eternal protest against Love.
A time there may be, tho' it must be far,
When men, by Knowledge reconciled to Law
In things material, shall convert to good
All that for ages I have made to them
Material evil. In that time my voice
Shall no more in man's life, as now, be heard
Protesting against God's material law.
But what of that? Still heard my voice shall be
In man's heart, still against himself protesting.
And, till that protest hath in man no place,
Where man's place, mine is, Cherub; nor canst
thou

Here, or wherever else man comes, to me
Cry 'Enter not!'

THE ANGEL.

Nor needs it, bitter fiend,
That I forbid thee. For thou canst not pass
The limit of thy nature, which God's love
Surpasses, here. Obey not me: thou still
Obeyest God.

SATAN.

Cherub, what more dost thou?

THE ANGEL.

Love Him.

SATAN.

Thou lovest, hypocrite, the gain
That's got for loving.

THE ANGEL.

Ay. Love's gain is love.

SATAN.

Hated or loved, here will I rest. Away!

THE ANGEL.

Not by the length of my authority,

But by the narrowness of thine, is fixt
Thy kingdom, Satan. But when He, by whom
Thy passing protest against permanent power
Is heard i' the incompleteness of man's life,
Shall, in man's life completed, have vouchsafed
Its complete refutation, then...

SATAN.

Ay! *then?*
Count me, prophetic Spirit, if thou canst,
How many wrinkles to the brow of Time
Shall ere that *Then* be added? And what then?
Thou knowest no more than I. When man no more
My work provides, thine own shall lack provision;
Whose task on earth is but the consequence
Of my procedure: temporary both.
Enough! I stand by my necessity,
Which is not of eternity, but time.
I know no Then nor There. I am Here and Now.
Standing beneath the glory of God, not in it,
Man casts upon this earth, whereon he stands,
The formidable shadow of himself:
The Spirit of that Shadow, which, where'er
Man goes, goes with him, darkening earth, am I.
Unto what end man's steps are bound, whose course,
Making it mark'd by darkness, everywhere
I dog protesting against light, or when
That end may be, I know not. But I know,

Nor care I to know more, that he and I,
I with my protest in man's life, and man,
Man in God's glory, in man's shadow I,
Have yet thro' time no journey short to make
Together; taking with us this day's deed,
Which yet is mine to deal with.

THE ANGEL.

If, in truth,
Spirit of Discontent, the unknown time
Of God's endurance doth, as thou dost boast,
Accord such leisure thine to meditate
Thy place in His incalculable scheme
Of pure perfection, and thy power thereon,
By Him permitted,—study this first law
To which all power is made conditional :—
Hate creates nothing.

SATAN.

Nay, but Hate destroys.

THE ANGEL.

For Love to still create.

SATAN.

And Love creates
For Hate to still destroy. Paid eulogist
Of unintelligible authorship,

I am the only critic of God's works
That do not praise them. And, for this, I think
It likes Him well enough to let me be,
And give me hearing with a certain zest
Which mere monotony of praise like thine
Would surfeit else. Moreover in this world
We tolerate each other, He and I,
Better than you surmise. I set men's wits
To question what they scarce would notice else,
And so find out what, having so found out,
They all the more admire. I keep alert
The Maker's pleasure in His works thereby,
To prove me bungler. Yet I praise Him best,
In my own way; and unto me He owes
Man's worship, which was ever born of fear.
Do I not manifest to men His power,
Whereof a part, nor that the least, in me
Put forth, completes the vast Two-fronted Will,
Against whose everlasting Yes and No
Man's frenzied being breaks, and moaningly
Grovels in abject terror? Which to Him
Is joy—the joy of feeling Himself felt
By what He made to feel Him; therefore made
Weak in all ways, but not withal so weak
But it can bear His foot upon its neck,
And, feeling what His strength is, worship it,
While the bruised head the bruising heel adores.
We rule, then, each,—both He and I,—by fear:

And He is strongest : but I still am strong.
Spake He not to His Prophet of old time,
" I form the light, and I the darkness : I
Make peace, and create evil : I, the Lord,
Do all these things ?" But half of all these things,
What hand but mine the doing of them moves ?
The Evil I, and I the Darkness ! Both
His work and will : then of His will and work
The great one half, made manifest, am I !
If I could be aught other than I am,
I would be He : and in that wish, methinks,
I own Him for my God, and worship Him—
Him—not this Other ; that resembles not
In aught the God I am content to serve.
Nor serve I only, but I honour Him ;
Keeping in honour those that serve Him here,
Strong kings, shrewd priests, and mighty men of war,
And all that upon earth is honourable.
But I can neither praise nor tolerate,
What I protest against—this latest change
Of purpose in the Ever-changing One.
Here, for the first time, I seem set aside ;
And, could I ever weep, I should weep now
For the perversity of this new plan,
Perceiving what must happen presently.
Like some long-trusted counseller, displaced
And discontented with the times, am I ;
Who sees the young prince pulling down the props

He spent his utmost pains on, to uphold,
Based on the popular fear, the father's throne.
I, that have been about the world so long,
Methinks should know it: and, if aught I know,
Men are not to be govern'd but by fear.
When they shall lose the wholesome dread, now theirs,
Of kings and priests, what next? Why, men will cease
To fear me even; and, ceasing to fear me,
Will cease to fear Jehovah. Heed the event!
But meanwhile men shall win their licence hard,
To laugh at what now scares them. I remain
In spite of the new comers. Long shall Love
Red-handed walk the world with Hate's own sword,
Nor plant one forward footstep, save in blood.
Therefore I stand here, Angel of the Watch,
Watching with thee. Whose watch I grudge not. Wait.
For vigil long must be both thine and mine,
And we will watch together.—

THE ANGEL.

Wild, as waves
That wash no shore, words wander. If between
Yon throbbing lights that round us roll and burn,
No radiant interelemental thrill
Made response to their restless hearts, perchance
The leaping lightsprings of the sun himself
Might blaze in sempiternal blackness, dark
To orbs beyond the never-beaten bound

And blank engulphment of his barren globe :
And all the kindred sovereignties of space,
His starry peers whose now-fraternal fires
Flash mutual rapture, then would wanly ply
Pale incommunicable pulses, fill'd
With ineffectual fervour. Even so,
Between us twain—spirits of spheres that move
In no same elemental sense of things,
No corresponsive impulse interchanging
From simultaneous impact of the Power
That keeps in commune all the souls it sways,
—Thought, like a beam that heats not, lights not, beating
On unimpressive absolute nothingness,
Visits in vain the waste and void of what
Holds thee and me asunder,
Obscure Power,
Which, in the ever-fleeting substance pent
Of all that passes, all that perishes,
The Eternal Fire eternally consumes,
What time from age to age, from hour to hour,
From soul to soul, burning, it proves itself
And all things else that Time, as fuel, flings
Into the furnace of transforming Love,
Leaving Hate's pile in ashes—pass thy way,
And ply thy transitory task ! Which is
To feed the fervour of the fire of God,
And speed its issue thro' the body and form
Of all experience, which it animates.

Ply thou thy task! accumulating Time's
Perversenesses, obstructions, enmities,
And unintelligent antagonisms;
Therewith, as faggots for the burning, bound,
To satisfy the everlasting flame
Whose altars are the ages: whence it glows
To spirits of men,—a beacon light; to thee,
Whose ever-dwindling substance, in that heat
Of Heavenly Love, from age to age assumes
Slow transformation,—thine own funeral pyre!
Dull Fiend, the more thou on this Fire of Love
Hast leave to heap all hideous hatreds, all
Denials, contradictions, cruelties,
Fables, and fears, and frenzied shames,—the more
Shall it, by all such stimulations stung
To intenser force, burn from the souls of men
Those multitudinous mischiefs that are made
Its sacrificial sustenance.

Enough!

Put forth thy hand.

SATAN.

Where art thou? feebly sounds
Thy voice, vain Angel: strong in word, but weak
In act to hold what now I seize. Thy voice
Floats to me, fainter, fainter! and thy form
Fades further, further, further, from my ken.
Thou flyest, Cherub!

THE ANGEL.

Self-deceiver, no!
Here, where I was, I am : and what I held
I hold. But thee thine ever-changing place
Hath changed already. Prince of passing ills,
Already in the Past thy footstep strays,
Seeking the Future.

SATAN.

What I seek I find
In thy despite : and what I find I win,
This Cross of Christ.

THE ANGEL.

The Cross of Christ wins *thee*.
As suns draw forth the vapours they dissolve,
So Love draws Hate, Truth, Falsehood, to itself
Whose touch annuls them ; ever doom'd to seek
Their destined dissolution. Take thy road,
Destroyer, to destruction ! Seize thy time,
And all thy power expend ; whose time is brief.
Brief shall thy time be, Satan, by so much
As most thy power is in that time put forth.
Do thou This Tree the dismal standard make
Of all the hosts of Darkness. Hither call
The legion'd lies, and wraths, and wrongs, that lurk
In life's yet dubious twilight. Here, where Christ,
For man's sake, was by man's hand crucified,

Let Christless churches crucify man's heart :
Where pity bled, let pitiless priests proclaim
Bloody dominion : man's oppressors all,
Where hung man's saviour, here their sceptres hang.
What then? O all unwise in wickedness!
The faster thou, to quench this kindled fire
Of deathless love, devouring deathful ills,
Shalt heap together from the tangled tracts
Of thorny Time all stubborn-hearted hates,
So much the sooner, Satan, shall all these
Be blasted, burn'd, oblitèrated, borne
Into oblivion—and, with these, thyself
(The fleeting shadow of a faded shape
Of darkness in a universe of light,
Like Sodom's burn'd-out guilt in gather'd smoke
Above her smouldering ashes, which anon
Left stainless the eternal heavens) depart
I know not to what place of unreveal'd
Employment in the Perfectness of Power
That perfects all things.
Thou, and what is thine,
All pomps, all powers, not legalised by love,
All forms of faith that fall as faith exceeds,
All bonds that bind, all burthens that oppress,
Conventions, sects, exclusions, enmities,
Earth, as Hate makes it—but the porch of Hell ;
Heaven, as Fear sees it—but a heartless eye
Fixt in the forehead of a frowning Fate,

Shall surely pass, and haply pass away :
But not the Word that Heaven and Earth this day
Recorded. Therefore, All is well, I say.
Peace and good will—God's Will—to man ! Amen.
God's will be done on Earth—good will to men—
Even as in Heaven.

SATAN.

Angel, ay ! But *when ?*

[*Human voices of those that bear the body of* CHRIST *faintly heard in the distance, dying away.*

Courage, O friends ! endure :
Bear all things : even as He :
Live—as He taught us—pure :
Die—as He left us—free.
Freed from the world that bound us,
Let the new life begin !
What know we of aught around us ?
We know but what is within.
Not of the world was He
When out of the world He chose us :
And not of the world are we :
And what, if the world oppose us ?
Struggle we must, and strive,
Sorrow, and suffer pain :
Die ever that we may live :
Lose often that we may gain.

Say ye not unto the soul
'Rest, soul! it is over.' Lo,
Beyond us is ever the goal,
And for ever before us the foe!
The strife that on earth is begun,
Not on earth is it ended, sure.
The cause is eternal, one
With the Godhead. Wherefore endure,
By the evil here and there
Try we, and test we, the good:
And O what if the evil were
Good, only misunderstood?
For, knowing not what is below,
We know not what is above:
But that all is well we know,
Knowing that all is love.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III.

ROMANCES.

"Quid salvum est si Roma perit?"—*Hieronymus*, Ep. 91.

LICINIUS.

PART I.

THE TIME.

I.

It was the fall and evening of a time
In whose large daylight, ere it sank, sublime
And strong, as bulks of brazen gods, that stand,
Bare-bodied, with helm'd head and armèd hand,
All massive monumental thoughts of hers
Rome's mind had mark'd in stately characters
Against the world's horizon. These, at last,
Fading, as darkness deepen'd thro' her vast
Dominion, Rome became mere space, spread forth,
Confused and shapeless, east, west, south, and north;
And, the whole homeless earth thus made her home,
Rome now might nowhere rid herself of Rome.
The heavens were all distemper'd with the breath
Of her old age. She, very nigh to death,
Paced thro' her perishing world in search of air
Unpoison'd by herself; but everywhere,

Like that Greek giant to whose frenzied frame
The blood of his slain foe clung fast as flame,
Withering the mighty limbs he could not free
From their disastrous trophy, so did she,
Choked by her own ensanguined purple, pant.

II.

Rome, in all places earth's inhabitant,
In no place earth's possessor any more,
Was thus by Rome pursued from shore to shore.
And, in that vast and sombre universe
Which was her dying chamber, 'twas Rome's curse
To see the shadows change to substances,
The substances to shadows: and all these
Mock'd her dim eye with their delirious train.
For now, from Power decay'd, in the dull wane
And woeful wasting out of her spent day,
Sick vapours rose that, rolling vague and grey,
Unshaped the face of everything that was.

III.

That severe Senate, once by Cyneas
To gods in synod liken'd, was become
Mere kennel for the curs that cramm'd in Rome
(Rome,—robb'd in turn by Goth, Hun, Vandal, Gaul,
And, having all devour'd, devour'd by all!)
Earth's offal,—the filch'd filth of every land:
Mongrels, they lick'd each new-made master's hand,

Snarling at one another. Gorged with gore,
The purple gluttons of the globe,—no more
They, whose tremendous sires were fain to tug
For savage nurture at the she wolf's dug,
With Mavors march'd, beneath the Bird of Jove,
To scale the shaken walls o'' the world. Craft throve,
As courage fail'd. Nor, now, the People rose,
And clamour'd, but the Courtier, plotting close,
Bided his time, and stabb'd. Thus tyrants, dying,
Made room for tyrants: tyranny thus vying
With tyranny: to suit which, slavery
With slavery, and fear with fear, did vie;
While Roman swords, for daggers used, were red
With murder, not with conquest. At the head
Of Rome's worst rabble (ill revering it!)
A new Religion's weird labarum, writ
On Rome's red ensigns by a Faith unknown
To Rome's rude sires, from Tiber, now, to Rhone,
Replaced her Senate's and her People's name:
Claiming whose sanction, in contempt of shame,
Blood-smear'd Brutality with grim Disgrace
Coupled, like dogs, upon the public place.
Slander, the stylus, Treason plied the knife:
And, preaching peace, Religion practised strife.

IV.

Old things had ceased, nor new things yet begun,
To justify their place beneath the sun.

The Future and the Past, contending, wrought
To wreck the Present, for whose faith they fought:
And, in the barbarous bosom of the new,
Grimly the worn-out old world's vices grew.
Some pure Patrician, in whose veins yet ran
The scornful blood of sires Etrurian,
Saw, newly shrined, as, frowning, past he trod,
The Mother of the Galilean God,
And cursed her: some hook-nosed Antiochene,
Whose great-grandfather Paul's first prize had been
Among the Rabbins, on the other side
Passing, beheld stark naked, wanton eyed,
Stout-bodied Venus in her ancient place,
And spat, devoutly brutal, in her face:
Some half-bred Cæsar, waiting for his chance,
Bow'd to both goddesses, and, with a glance
Behind him, pass'd, suspicious, on his way.

V.

Rome, in the main, for her part, like some grey
Bedridden beldam, petulant and weak,
That from her own stout firstborn's sunburnt cheek,
And brawny arm, turns, captious, to caress
The sprawling grandchild on her knees, and bless
With mumbling lip the unswaddled infancy
Whose manhood will not dawn before she die,
Less loved whatever rested of her prime
Than the loud childhood of the later time:

And the new creed, as babes are by the nurse,
Fondled and scolded, and both ways made worse,
Babbling, clench'd baby clutches to destroy
Both sun and moon. An empire was its toy.
Donatus, with fierce fingers dipp'd in gall,
Dragg'd down Cicilien thro' the councils all:
From sultry churches Carthagenian
To convents cold in Arles the echoes ran
Of curses, all pure Christian, in bad Greek:
Cicilien damn'd Donatus. Shriek for shriek,
And stab for stab, with gladiatorial gust,
And, clamorous, scattering cumbrous clouds of dust,
The well-match'd theologic athletes strove,
While Cæsar, smiling, eyed them from above.
Meanwhile, amid the hubbub, unalarm'd,
That "Christian Cicero," Lactantius, charm'd
Young Crispus; and in smoothest Latin praised
Those Christian virtues on whose work he gazed;
Discomfited the Polytheist sore,
And smote the fall'n Olympians by the score;
Slaughtering, with finely-pointed periods
Of borrow'd Ciceronian, Cicero's gods.

VI.

Then, when Licinius, Rome's last Roman, saw
The gods, his sires had worshipt with grave awe,
By slave, and savage, pimp, buffoon, and priest
Scorn'd and insulted, "Unavenged, at least,

The great gods die not!" groan'd the grey old man.
And, breaking bound from wilds Pannonian,
He, with a remnant rallied to the name
Of Jove the Avenger, cross'd the world, and came,
Camping on Hebrus, to confront the Sign
Of that new Creed proclaimed by Constantine.

PART II.

THE MAN.

I.

Evening. At morn the battle. Met at last,
Stood, face to face, the Future and the Past.
Under the wild and sullen hills of Thrace,
Ominous, wrathful, ruin in his face,
On the last day of his own deity
The sun sunk. Mystic lights, from sky to sky,
Shot meteoric thro' the startled stars,
O'er regions named from him that, born of Mars,
First reign'd among those snowy mountain tops,
What time grey Saturn by the sons of Ops
Was, in his turn—as, by himself, had been
Cœlus, his sire—dethroned. For Power, not e'en
In Heaven, one hand holds ever. There, while o'er
Rome's antique ensigns, Jove's own Bird once more

Spread his broad wings upon the gloomy air,
The robed Haruspices, with silent care,
Prepared the victim, and asperged the shrine
Mysteriously with sprinkled meal and wine
And frankincense, till all together gleam'd
The altars of the Twelve Great Gods, and stream'd
With fragrant fumes. A shout of pride : a sound
Of shields in closing circle clasht all round
The central camp : where martial cymbals clang'd
Applause, as old Licinius thus harangued
The legions loyal to the gods he loved :

II.

" Romans, whose pride is by your name approved,
The immortal gods, that to your fathers gave
The empire they now call their sons to save,
From yonder altars on those sons look down,
And all Olympus deems our cause its own.
With us the gods to battle go : with us
Whatever rests of Rome yet virtuous,
Yet Roman : all of manhood left on earth,
Of godhood left in Heaven. From every hearth
Where Roman sons revere heroic sires
Our hearts have caught hereditary fires.
Each Roman here, to rescue Rome her laws,
Her gods, her memories, her manhood, draws
The sword Rome gave her children. Friends, our foes
Not us alone, but the great gods, oppose.

False to the faith of their forefathers, they,
To change Rome's laws, and chase her gods away,
Have arm'd Dishonour. Such their cause. Our own
To serve, and save, the old worth, the old renown
Of all that made Rome, ROME. A cause so just
I, with just faith, to the great gods entrust;
Whose cause it is. But if, O friends, in truth,
All we now fight for—all that to our youth
Was sacred, all that to our age is dear,
The greatness of the gods that we revere,
The manful Past that manly minds admire,
The immortal name of Rome's immortal sire,
The urns wherein our fathers' dust is laid,
The shrines they built us, and the laws they made,
Ay, even the banners that they bore in war!
—Were all these things less noble than they are,
Yet, where, in fortune's poorest state, is he,
So poor in spirit, that can endure to see
Foul'd by the rabble on his own hearth floor
The meanest garb that his dead father wore?
Or what man breathes, tho' born of humblest birth,
That hallows not whate'er remains on earth
—Each frailest relic, and each feeblest trace,
His reverent love can rescue from disgrace—
Of her that bore him? Direr monster none,
Since Pyrrha's age, hath prey'd on earth, nor done
More impious deed, than this unfather'd Faith;
Man's memories all unmothering by a breath

Which blights the Present, strikes the godlike Past
Godless, and doth the barren Future blast
Bare of the bright presiding Powers that blest
Our great forefathers, gone to glorious rest;
They in whose names, with pure libations
Full-pour'd, our mothers blest their unborn sons;
Man's fair familiar Presidencies all,
Whose forms made sacred even a foeman's hall!
These, whom we fight for, are the gods that fought
For great Achilles; are the gods that brought
The wise Ulysses to his island home,
And brought from Troy the patriarch sire of Rome.
Them old Homerus, them Virgilius, sung:
Them heroes worshipt: them we know. This young
New-found half-god, Jew-born and bastard both,
Patron of slaves, and Power of upstart growth,
Where was he when Troy burn'd? Enough! We know
Whose cause is ours—Rome's cause! whose foe—Rome's foe!
Whose gods—Rome's gods! In hands, more mighty far
Than ours, the mighty issues of this war
Hang. If we fall, Romans, with us falls all
Romans have lived for. But we cannot fall,
Rome cannot fall, while yet of Rome there be
A score of Romans left to cry with me,
'Honour to our dead fathers!'"

III.

Proud he spake.
And from that armèd auditory brake
The multitudinous echo of his mind,
In human-hearted thunder, the night wind
Roll'd hoarse above the battle-heapèd ground.

PART III.

THE GODS.

I.

But afterward; when, save the steel-shod sound
O' the surly sentinel from tent to tent,
The camps were silent, and the night far spent,
Licinius, rising in the restless night,
Mused by the altars of his gods.

II.

Faint light
Stream'd from the faded embers, and faint fume.
O'er all his spirit a supernatural gloom
Had fall'n, and that profound discouragement
Which seizes on the soul whose passion, spent
In stormy thought, leaves action half unnerved.
In dead cold skies the dark east, unobserved,

Wax'd sallow. Dead-cold influences pass'd
About the old man's heart. Licinius cast
His body upon the ground, and felt a Fear
Plant its foot on him in the darkness drear,
And pray'd intensely, as men only pray
When Fear is on them. Terror pass'd away.
A mystic wind was moving in his hair :
And hands unearthly touch'd him unaware.

III.

He, gazing up against the scatter'd gleam
Of the late stars, what time her dragon team
The night's moon-fronted maiden charioteer
Down o'er the dark world's edge was driving clear,
Saw—bright above the black and massy earth,
From cope to base—beyond the utmost girth
Of their wide-orb'd horizons, the intense
And intricate heavens, with silent vehemence,
Burst supernaturally open ; as tho'
A bud should in a moment's time, not grow,
But change itself, into a flower full-blown.

IV.

To his sole sight was such a marvel shown.
The fair Olympians, all at once, and all
Together, in the Ambrosial Banquet Hall !

Each august countenance (vast gladness closed
In complete calm) ineffably composed
To an aweful beauty. Unendurably bare
The bright celestial nakednesses were.
And, far behind those Heavenly Presences,
Heaven's self lay bare to the innermost abyss
Of the unsounded azure. Orb in orb
Of what both seem'd to emit and to absorb,
In the same everlasting moment, light,
Space, silence,—sporting with the infinite!
For, to the universe, the universe
Listening, the while it answer'd, did immerse
The sound within the silentness of things.
Lights—meteors—mystic messengers, with wings,
Wands, trumpets, crowns—silently came and went
In the profound, but lucid, element
Of that unfathomable, far abysm,
Wherein (as, cloven by the crystal prism
It pierces, one pure ray of perfect light
Doth into divers colours disunite
And scatter its uncolour'd unity)
Life—all the vast varieties, that lie
In Life's vast oneness, loosed. Befitting form
Each Spirit shaped itself from calm, or storm,
Snow, fire, rain, thunder, and sea-thrilling wind:
All creatures of the All-creative Mind,
That makes each moment, and each moment mars
Its own imaginings: thoughts, many as stars,

Or birds innumerable upon the wing :
Some, with congenial chance incarnating
Their restless essence, and so, brightening : some,
As soon as born, dissolved within the dome
Of that deep-lighted distance. Underneath,
The dim world, wrapt in mist of mortal breath,
Low glimmering, sea and land. And all about
The belted orb, close-coiling in and out,
Like a sleek snake with vary-colour'd back,
Glitter'd the constellated zodiac.
But, over savage peaks in lonesome lands,
Plains strown with battle, billowy seas, blown sands
Where round the raggèd bulks of broken ships
The white foam whirl'd,—and over leafy slips
Of sunken lawns, lone isles, and slumbrous lakes,
Where naked nymphs lured fauns from forest brakes,
To roaring cities, girt with gated walls
(Whitening whose mason'd floors at intervals,
'Twixt bridges piled, and dark with passing droves,
Past milk-white temples, past green temple groves,
Tall obelisks, and statues somnolent,
Along the streeted wharves the water went
Barge-laden) slided down the silent sky,
Bearing disaster, bearing victory,
With benedictions these, as those with ills,
The viewless heralds of the Heavenly Wills,
Unmindful of the murmuring of mankind.

V.

All vague as vapour shapen by the wind
To mimic mountain, cape, or continent,
That every moment changes, came and went,
With wondrous modulation manifold,
The vision of that marvellous movement, roll'd
Around the zonèd orb of Circumstance,
Revolving in the marginless expanse
Whereon the serene doors and porches all
Of that sublime god-builded Banquet Hall
Opening, let in and out Eternity.

VI.

There, midmost of his kindred godheads, high
In contemplative glory, and calm as morn
On lone Olympus (where no foot hath worn
Heaven's white snow from the summit of the world)
Sat Father Jove. From whose crown'd temples curl'd
The locks that, shaken, shake the woody tops
Of scornful hills, and o'er the full-ear'd crops
Roll blighting thunders, in storms, white or blue,
Of hail and rain. Broad-brow'd, broad-bearded too,
In meditative mood, with slack right hand
The cypress sceptre of his vast command
He, leaning forward, lightly held. All bare
The god's broad chest and ample shoulders were :
For gods, in company with gods, forego
Disguises meant for men : but all below

His spacious waist, in floods of massy fold,
From his large knees the lilied vesture roll'd :
Lest mortal eyes should, even in Heaven, espy
Aught save the robe that wraps the Deity.

VII.

Firm by Jove's foot, watching the heedless play
Of the low-flighted world, his purblind prey,
Perch'd on the sheavèd thunders, with keen eye,
The dusky-feather'd King of Birds. Hard by,
At the right hand of her great spouse, the Queen
Of scorn, majestic, with man-quelling mien,
And regnant eyes, whose large looks everywhere
Were felt in Heaven, gazed from her blazing chair ;
Whereon, to left and right, from either side
Four crested peacocks droop'd their Argus-eyed
Junonian trains. Behind, above her head
The attendant Iris, her handmaiden, spread
Her bright bow, woven from the azure grain
Of the midsummer silver-threaded rain.
That eloquent spirit of the woodland air,
Men call the cuckoo (which, being bodiless there,
Needs not, and builds not, any nest on earth)
Sat on her stately sceptre.

VIII.

Solemn mirth,
Like sempiternal summer, fill'd the hall

Where, round that Twain, the lesser godheads all,
At ease reclining by the ambrosial board,
In rosy circle ranged. Save one: Hell's lord,
The black-brow'd Pluto. Thro' Heaven's cloudy gaps,
Where lurk the lightnings, no loud thunder-claps
Companion (they whose sport on sultry nights
Peoples the peak'd horizon with pale lights)
His gloomy kingdoms on the nether deep
Glimmer'd, as dreams do thro' the gates of Sleep:
From earth removed than earth is from the sun
Thrice further: where sulphureous Phlegethon
Vomits his sullen ooze—main sewer of sin,
That, in Hell ended, doth on earth begin.
There, dubious in the light by Hecate brew'd
For ghastly uses, a vast multitude
Of shapes—all shadows of the lives of men—
Continually coming, sought the den
Man's fear digs in his conscience for his crimes:
The outcasts of all ages, from all climes,
Doom'd by all creeds: Religion's ship-wreck'd crew,
Barbarian, Roman, Christian, Greek, and Jew:
Who, in the glare of that disastrous light,
Gazed on each other's faces (dismal sight!)
And knew themselves, at last, for kinsmen drear,
The common offspring of one parent, Fear.
For, tho' man change his gods full many times,
Yet changed gods change not man, nor he his crimes:
Still from the knowledge of himself he breeds

Fears that make Hell the helpmate of all creeds,
Or old or new. And, even already, all
The brazen bound of that Tartarean wall,
Which not the gods themselves can overleap,
In windy circuit o'er the sulphurous deep,
Half-Gothic towers, by Monkish masons built,
Put dimly forth. Nought but the shame and guilt
Seem'd real in the ghostly flux below
Of swimming change, that surged from woe to woe:
So, flexile as man's ever-moving mind,
Whose masonry all monstrous forms combined
In one immense metropolis of Pain,
Tho' moor'd by Fear upon a midnight main,
Yet pace with time Hell's fluent structures kept,
From each new architectural adept
Fresh grimness winning.

IX.

But all this was seen
In fluctuation indistinct between
The gaps of Heaven, thro' filmy distances
Of darkness, wild as wicked fancy is:
Nor marr'd the mirth of that Olympian feast
More than spots floating on the sun's bright breast
Darken his glory.

X.

Only, in the first

Amazing moment, when the vision burst
On him that saw it, Hebe, filling up
With nectarous œnomel a glorious cup,
Paused, as she pour'd, and stared, with open eyes
And open mouth, in half-displeased surprise,
Upon the wondering mortal. For he had,
To her, the ever-insolently-glad,
In the great human sadness of his face,
The aspect of a creature out of place :
As tho' into her golden cup had dropp'd
A sudden spider. Ganymede, too, stopp'd
Teasing Jove's Eagle : who, with a great cry,
Rose, rough'd his feathers, seem'd about to fly,
But, seeing Jove so quiet, droop'd his wing,
And waited watchful of his keen-eyed king.
Venus with glance disdainful turn'd to scan
The old man's face : then, seeing that the man
Was chopp'd with battle, sun-bronzed, seam'd with scars,
She, whose white arm was round the throat of Mars,
Pointed a rosy finger, veiling half
In her soft eyes a little mirthful laugh
Under delicious lids dark-lash'd. But he
Look'd on his worshipper remorsefully,
As some grave chieftain, when the strife is done,
Safe and unhurt himself, might gaze upon
His wounded battle-horse about to die.
Amor, that, trifling with his bow hard by,
Noticed not this new comer of the earth

(He having both eyes bandaged from his birth)
Guess'd, with that instinct arch to children given
For mischievous occasion (since, thro' Heaven,
The babble of the mighty banquet hall
Suddenly ceased, a moment's space) that all
The attention of the gods was occupied:
And furtively, by Dian unespied,
From her chaste quiver stole the arrows keen,
And, in their places, with mock-serious mien,
The rosy rascal-hearted child his own
Lascivious little wingèd darts dropp'd down.
Poor Psyche, with sad eyes, silent, apart,
Sat watching her boy-spouse: and wish'd his dart
Had ever been like Dian's. For, tho' now
The wrath appeased of Venus did allow
To her, as true wife of her truant lord,
Place by his side at the ambrosial board,
Yet on her still the great gods look'd askance,
As a new comer, of small circumstance,
And doubtful origin: and light-hearted Love
'Mid loose-zoned goddesses was wont to rove
Not seldom, with no Psyche by his side:
"For," said they all, "'tis fit that one allied
Beneath him, to his nobler native place
Returning, should consort with his own race,
Not tamely tied to a mate of meaner birth."
Such things in Heaven once, and oft on earth,
Have been. So Psyche mourn'd to find Love wed

Was not Love fixt: tho' stately Hymen said
Much to console her, whispering at her ear
"Love comes and goes: but I am ever here:
Look in my face: am I not fair?" And she,
Sighing, said only "O Hymen, counsel me,
If thou art wise, how souls may hold Love close!"

PART IV.

THE PAST.

I.

But great Apollo in all his glory uprose.
And, even as when, what time strong mountains swoon,
And tremble, in a sumptuous summer noon,
And all the under air is still, so still
That no leaf stirs, o'er some etherial hill
Round which heaven's highest influences range
Invisibly, a cloud, with solemn change,
Begins to move; drooping his globèd glory
Slowly adown that inland promontory;
So down Olympus moved the Lyric God,
Majestic. All his serious visage glow'd
With inner light, and music, mixt with fire,
Stream'd from the strings of his Mercurial lyre,
Preluding prophecy.

II.

Severe, he stood
Above the Roman, resting in a flood
Of radiance clear, and thus stern speech began :

" Ill counsell'd, and rash-spirited old man !
Learn to revere the all-wise Necessity,
That to the unceasing wheel of Time, whereby
Earth takes the shape by Heaven design'd, holds fast
Man's ductile clay ; and, with the solid Past
Fusing the fluid Present's ardours, doth
The bright fantastic Future form from both.
Deem'st thou that, at thy summons, shall return
To earth the Powers whose parting footsteps spurn
Shrines where forever, since his course began,
The Names man worships are belied by man ?
I will unfold the full mind of the gods,
From men obscured by Time's dull periods.
For man was on the earth ere we, that are
Not his first teachers, nor his last, were 'ware
Of his unblest condition : who, being born
Above the brutes, is but the more forlorn,
If missing consciousness of aught above
Himself, for him, in turn, to serve and love.
We, therefore, then, with gentle visitings,
To earth descended ; and, from lonesome springs,
And hollow woods, lending to mountain winds,
And forest leaves, our language, with men's minds

Held commune : prompting man, by wishfulness
For the divineness of things fair, to press
Strong search for what they only find that seek.
Until, at length, from every river creek,
And winding vale, and wooded mountain, stole
Upon man's sense, in visible shape, the whole
Society of that immortal life
Which, mingling with man's own, made strong its strife,
Inspired its contemplation, beautified
Its being, and, ennobling earth, allied
Men, by gods visited, to gods, by men
Sought and perceived. Nor were we churlish then
To mortals. Wisdom, out of whisperous trees,
More sweet than whitest honey by wild bees
Suck'd from Midsummer's veins, to shepherd priests
We pour'd in oracles ; and at men's feasts
Sat down familiar, or beside their hearths ;
Teaching Old Age how best the dædal earth's
Wind-sown abundance, might, by skill increased,
Be harvested, when manful Youth the beast,
That's foe to man, had, help'd of us, subdued :
Youth, whose yet earnest eyes in ours first viewed
The images of what man's life might be
By imitating gods ! Neither did we
Withhold the godlike gift of glorious Song.
Brutish we found man's life, the brutes among ;
Beauteous we strove to make it...strove in vain !
Since man's low nature, failing to attain

The life of gods, but filch'd from gods their names
To deify what most degrades, most shames,
The life of man. Ill thank'd was all our toil!
To glorify earth's clay, oh, not to soil
Heaven's azure! came we from the kindly skies,
Kindling immortal fire in mortal eyes.
We gave men Beauty. But our gift, misused,
Hath wrong'd the givers. Have not men abused
Our very names, invoking them amiss
To deify ill deeds? Was it for this
Dian is chaste? Mars brave? and Venus fair?
And Jove just-minded? Wherefore, whatsoe'er
Henceforth men worship (whose base sense, indeed,
With its own baseness grown content, hath need
—If any price man's race may ransom yet
From bondage to its own bad life—to get,
By sharp compulsion of Heaven's highest will,
Keen knowledge of a nobler godhead, still
More potent, or more pitiful, than ours,
Whose images men's hands have hid with flowers
So thick, men's eyes no longer mark the frown
On each wrong'd forehead 'neath its shameful crown)
We, at the least, resign man's earth, and man,
To fates by us no more controll'd. Nor can
Man's worship mock our altars any more.
Not unto us, henceforth, your priests shall pour
The victim's blood. Not ours, henceforth, the names
Invoked on earth to sanction earth's worst shames.

Not simulating service in our cause
Shall Fraud forge Heaven's approval of the laws
Devised by wicked Force to sanction Wrong.
Not ours the worshippers whose zeal shall throng
Dungeons with dying, charnel dens with dead.
Nor yet to us shall praise be sung, prayer said,
Whenever men henceforth have injured men.
Why should we bide on earth, and be again
Dishonour'd in the deeds whereby mankind
Profess to honour Heaven?

"Yet shall they find,
Who yet may seek, us. Not where we have been,
By thrones, on altars, seen, and vainly seen,
Thro' purchased incense clouding shrines profaned!
But I, that from of old this power attain'd,—
Having foreseen the Future,—to make fast
What in the Future man desires—the Past,
Have wrought for man, by means of mighty Song,
A mystic world, which neither change can wrong,
Nor time can trouble. And, therein, man yet
May gaze on gods, and fashion from Regret
Fair forms resembling Hope. Wherefore, do thou
Cease to avoid the Inevitable. Know
That we, the gods, who minister no more
To man's ambition, fairer than of yore
Thy fathers found us, since henceforth set free
From all that mixt us with mortality,
Range undisturb'd, beyond all reach of change,

In regions where immortal memories range,
Unvext by mortal hopes : responsible
For mortal wrongs no longer.
" Deem not ill
For man whatever betters aught man deems,
Or hath deem'd, beautiful, tho' but in dreams.
Not by shrines shatter'd, not by statues spurn'd,
Temples deserted, altars overturn'd,
And incense stinted, are the gods disgraced ;
But by base homage of a herd debased,
By Faith in service to a fraudful Force,
And wrongful deed by righteous name made worse.

" Nor yet, before the blaze of shrines not ours,
Fail we, or fall we. For the Heavenly Powers
Strive not against each other, as do those
Earth breeds of earth ; nor can the gods be foes
O' the Godhead. Conquer'd are we not : since not
Contending. Deemest thou that Time can plot
Against Eternity ? Fool ! doth the seed
Grudge to his place the tree 'twas born to breed ?
The bud the blossom which it bursts to bear,
When Summer's summons thro' the sunlit air
Shatters the long-shut sleep, whose dreams occult
Are realised in sleep's aroused result ?
Time, that returns not, errs not. Be content,
Knowing thus much : nor toil against the event
Whereto Time tends."

III.

Thus, frowning, Phœbus said.
And Jove, from high Olympus, bow'd his head.

PART V.

THE PRESENT.

I.

There is a stillness of the upper air,
Foreboding change; when mighty winds prepare
In secret sudden war upon the world.
And when that stillness breaks, forests are hurl'd
Asunder, and sea-sceptring navies drown'd.
There is another stillness, more profound,
Worse change foreboding; of the inmost soul,
In that dread moment when, from the controul
Of life's long acquiescence in whate'er
Life's faith has been, revolted thoughts prepare
War on man's nature. When that stillness breaks,
A heart breaks with it, in the shock that shakes
Deep-planted custom, and roots up the hold
Of long-grown habit, and observance old.

From such a stillness in himself, at last,
Licinius raised his voice. The spasm, that pass'd

Across the quivering features of the man,
Smit by stern speech from lips Olympian,
Vext, as it rose, the staggering voice, down-weigh'd
With heavy meanings hard to express.

II.

He said:

"Immortal gods, by Rome revered! to me,
A mortal man, revering Rome, did she
This creed bequeath: that to all sons she bears
There is but One Necessity (made theirs
In Rome's requital for a Roman's name)
—Living, or dying, never to know shame:
Never to shrink from pain: never recant
Recorded faith: never be suppliant
For life less noble than 'tis man's to make
Death in the cause which, even tho' gods forsake,
Honour, retain'd, keeps sacred to the last.
This, also, in the records of Rome's Past
My life read once: and read long since, indeed,
Too far to new-live now a new-learn'd creed:
—That, when to all the creatures under heaven
Their severally allotted tasks were given,
On man—man only—the injunction fell,
To do, by daring, the impossible:
That he who doth, tho' dying, dauntless still,
Plant the pale standard of unbaffled Will
On Fate's breach'd battlements, and to the end,

Defeating thus defeat itself, contend
Tenacious in the teeth of tenfold odds,
Uplifts the life he loses to the gods.

"Lies! lies! all lies! Since gods live careless lives,
Concern'd in nought for which man's being strives.
Justice? men deem'd the image of the mind
Of gods—a mere invention of mankind!
Love?—some blind blood-beat in the veins of youth!
Belief?—man's substitute for knowledge! Truth?
—Unknown in Heaven! Why man, whom you despise,
O'erweening gods, for getting all these lies
By heart in vain, seems nobler after all,
More godlike, than yourselves.
"Nor yet, so small,
So slight, so all unworthy, first appear'd
Man's race, but what you gods have interfered
Too much with man's condition to assume
This late indifference to your work—his doom.
Since one thing have you been at pains to do,
—To cheat the chosen fools that trusted you,
False gods, and filch thanksgiving, foully gain'd,
For all whereto the woeful end ordain'd
Was but betrayal.
"What! then, all meant nought?
All, all, that Delos told and Delphi taught,
Tho' a god spake it? All your oracles,
Your priests, your bards, your sacred woods and wells?

Liars of lies! all pledged to cheat man's hope
In gods too careless, or too weak, to cope,
With aught man suffers!
"Well can I believe
How man's imperfect progress might deceive,
And fail, as 'twere (man's prowess, at the best,
Crippled by means inadequate confess'd!)
The august hopes, by some bright periods
Of his brave promise, in the mind of gods
Inspired. But I, a man, no way can find
Among the many wanderings of my mind,
To imagine even how gods (whose godheads are
Glorious with power, each perfect as a star)
Should at the last fall short of hopes by them
In man's mind once awaken'd.
"Gods, condemn,
Punish man, plague him . . . but forsake him? No!
Not for your own sakes! Lest your godhoods grow,
From long disuse of godlike attributes,
Less lovely even than the life of brutes,
Not being so helpful.
"Yet, howe'er that be,
I, at the least, have loved ye, trusted ye,
So long that, tho' for me you fight no more,
Still must I fight for you. 'Twill soon be o'er:
Or one way, or another. Soonest, best,
I think: nor greatly care to know the rest.
One thing's to gain yet—death. No room to range

From what I am! The gods may change, Fate change,
I cannot. Not each casual tomb will fit
The fame a Roman's death consigns to it.
And I for this too-long-continued life
Must find fit end: hew out, with gods at strife,
Tho' sword break, heart break, all break, in the attempt,
Memorial—mournful, but, at least, exempt
From all incongruous contradiction vile.
Nor is life left me to lament, meanwhile,
Life's failure—frustrate faith, and fruitless deed!
One life, wherewith to fail, or to succeed,
Is man's. One only. I, at my life's end,
Cannot go back to the beginning—mend
What it hath made me—unlove what I loved—
Love what I loathed—condemn what I approved—
New-self myself, to suit occasion new.
The arrow, sped, must still its flight pursue
As first the bowman aim'd it, tho' since then
The bowman shift his ground. Life speeds with men
Even thus. And few can chuse, none change, what's done.
A man hath but one mother: and but one
Childhood: one past: one future: but one hearth:
One heart—to give or keep: one Heaven: one earth:
And one religion.

"Yet thus much, tho' spent
His force, and spoil'd his whole life's element,
A man may do: and this, at least, will I!
Ere, quench'd, the fires that still consume me, die,

I will collect their scatter'd heats, push all
Life's ashes, even while yet the embers fall,
Into a heap, and send the dying flame
Full in Heaven's face!

"O worthy of thy name,
Loxian Apollo! Boots it me to know
That men may see thee, as I see thee now,
Far from the life thy beauty doth but wrong,
Calm on the golden summits of Old Song?
No singer I! but a dull soldier: fit
Simply to love a thing, and fight for it,
Or hate a thing, and fight against it. Vent
My soul in song, I cannot, I! content
To do, at least, what merits to be sung:
Hold fast, when old, the faith I pledged when young:
Live up to it: die for it, if needs be.
What comfort, O Apollo, dwells for me,
Or what for any man, in leave to praise
The life of gods whose life his own betrays?
Their loves, that love him not? their power, that is
The mockery of the weakness they leave his?
Sing no more songs, Apollo, in men's ears!
Leave us, ye gods, in silence to the tears
You understand not! Spare this much vext earth
Distracting visions of Heaven's unshared mirth!
This, also, ere I die" . . . . .

III.

But there, his heart
Brake the thought in it, sharply; as a dart
Breaks in the effort of a wounded man
To pluck it from the wound.
O'er Heaven's face ran
A tremble of white anger: like the light
Of wind-blown stars when, on a winter night,
The howling earth-born gust, that devastates
His own dark birthplace, having burst the grates
Of some grim-pillar'd forest (whose black bars
Release him, groaning) strives against the stars;
Their icy brilliance only kindling thus
To a keener glory. Eyes contemptuous,
Eyes cruel with calm scorn of all that pain
Which scorch'd his own, burn'd on him. The disdain
Of brows divine, in phalanx infinite
And formidable of transcendent light,
Glow'd from Heaven's depths against him. But all these
Luminous and severe solemnities
He noticed not. For, when the wretched man
First to accuse the assembled gods began,
Love, from the midmost rosy Heaven, where he
Was sporting, stole a-tip-toe, curiously,
Closer at each word, by no eyes perceived
Save Psyche's, brightening while her bosom heaved
With some unwonted spasm, and her sad brow
Flush'd, as a pale star flushes when the glow

Of the full-flowing sunset, sweet and warm,
Is pour'd upon it. With half-lifted arm,
And troubled countenance, and listening ear,
Love, thus, in pensive posture, linger'd near
Whence came that voice (among their bright abodes
Ambrosial, then first heard by those glad gods)
Of Human Pain denouncing Heavenly Joy.
And, on the blind face of the beauteous Boy
The man's look lightening, as he lifted it
Defiant of whatever it might meet
In Heaven, was caught, and fasten'd where it fell,
By new incentive irresistible
To special indignation. Even as when
In the throng'd circus, from the swarm of men
That hem and hurt him, some wild beast selects
One man, whom suddenly his wrath detects
As most obnoxious, and, in mid assault
On all the others, swiftly swerves, makes halt,
And flies at him that's nearest; so the man,
From all that hostile cirque Olympian
Selecting Love, cried to him

IV.

"Thou immature
And mindless god! whose smiling sinecure
Is but a blindfold childhood never grown!
Comest thou to mock at what thou hast not known
—Man's full-grown misery at the end of all

The strivings of a life, spent past recall,
Used out, in urging, on its destin'd way
To dissolution, force that went astray
By struggling upwards? Such a vapour streams
From altars vainly lit; which, tho' it seems
To go up to the gods, goes nowhere—is
Made nothing, merged in that wide nothingness
Men take for Heaven! Thou purblind lord of all
Purblindest instincts! thee, not Love I call,
But Lust. For man's loss, Love must needs be sad:
Lust, with no eyes to see man's loss, is glad,
As thou art. Yet, since men misname thee Love,
Loose, if thou canst, what, pent in me, doth move
Importunate, as some dumb creature curst
With such a secret as at length must burst
Its heart, endeavouring to be understood.
O Love, if thou be Love, pluck off that hood
That hides thine eyes from human grief. Revere
Love's last result on earth—a wretch's tear!
Break silence, Love! Thee only, of the gods,
I ask . . . What is it heaves earth's sullen clods
When Spring winds, wet with tears from trembling boughs,
Breathe, and behold! in place of snows (those snows
Themselves earth's seasonable comforters)
The abounding violet! Or what Spirit stirs
In tones and scents that bathe man's wearied heart
With fresh belief, and bid the strong tears start
For solemn joy? What mystic inmate gives

Some sense of loveliness to all that lives :
Some worth, tho' hinder'd, to the humblest worm
That crawls ; some purpose to the poorest germ
That buds unwitness'd from the meanest seed :
Some beauty to the barest rock's worst weed ?
Which, thro' all pores of Being, everywhere
Passing, at last, into Man's Life ; and there
Changing what was (till such a change it knew)
Merely, perchance, some droplet of wild dew,
Clasping a thorn, to Pity ; some tost sea,
To Aspiration passionate ; some tree,
That struggles with the savage gust forlorn
All night, wherein a wild bird sings at morn
Exulting, to the Fortitude of Faith ;
In Man grows audible ; speaks out, and saith
To Heaven "Await me !" with a human voice :
Man here, God everywhere ! Which doth rejoice,
And droop, live, strive, and grieve, and grow, with man :
And so, completing from all points, the plan
Of a god's vast experience in God's Bliss,
—Too perfect, too immeasurable, to miss
The manifold significance of tears,
Strength strain'd from weakness, struggle that endears
Triumph, and failure forced into success,—
Looks down thro' all inferior grades to bless
Life's hopes with Love's assurance of the end
Whereto all Life, by Love inspired, doth tend !
Such a god dare not be indifferent

To man's success or failure : He, the Event,
Which man, His Means, he fashions to fulfil :
A god's means, therefore worth a god's care still !
Oh, such a god, my spirit whispers me,
Tho' nameless yet, and yet unknown, must be.
I seek His Face among your faces all,
Olympians ; and, not finding it, I call
Earth's woe to witness that you do not well,
Being gods, to leave man godless . . . You ! that tell,
Smiling the while, as you depart serene,
Me that have loved you, me whose life hath been
Yours, tho' in vain, yours past recovery, here
At that life's cheated end, to now revere
What love of you hath bid me loathe . . . .
"If He—
If He, indeed, were—what ye are not, ye !—
That God—that Love, which . . . Ah, but know I not,
Too well, with cause to curse them all for what
They are—and do—His worshippers ? the late
Last form of man's forlornness . . . men that hate
Even each other !
"Fair, false Forms depart !
Happy in ignorance of the human heart
You have deceived ! Apollo, load some star
With liquid music far from earth ! Far, far
From eyes worn out with weeping wasted love,
O Venus, guide whatever golden dove
Delights to draw thy lucid wheels !

"But we?
The men that loved you, and are left?
"Ah me,
What goal to us remains, whose course some Fate
Impels unwilling where no prize can wait
The weary runner?
"He, that late is come
To rule from your abandon'd thrones the scum
And sewage of that rough-hewn rabble world
Wrought from the ruins of Rome's pride down-hurl'd,
Why comes He now, who comes so late? He too,
Hath He not all too long connived with you
At man's disaster? If He love to be
Beloved of men, why so long linger'd He?
Letting men grow familiar, age by age,
With gods not destined to endure; engage,
Unwarn'd, to you the homage, He now claims,
And you resign; while men that got your names
By heart, have now no heart left to unlearn
The faith which, sued for ages, given, you spurn!
Is nothing sure? Must man's existence be
Barter'd and bandied thus eternally
From god to god? By each new master made
Pull down in haste what each last master bade
The o'ertask'd drudge build up with toil intense?
Oh, for some voice Love's sanction to dispense
To Life's endeavour! oh for one, but one,
Of all you gods, whose forms I gaze upon

With grief left godless, to assure at last
This else-wrong'd spirit, that, in despite the Past,
Which fail'd in power, the Present, by despair
Darken'd, the Future, desolate and bare,
It did not ill to trust an instinct, wrong'd
Not seldom, oft rebuked, but yet prolong'd
Thro' strangling hinderance and confounding chance;
Which, fronting Heaven with constant countenance,
Would whisper, 'I am love, and love is there,
And love to love is kindred everywhere!'
But which of all the gods can do this?"

PART VI.

THE FUTURE.

I.

"I!"
Love answer'd; and sprang forth with such a cry
As paled, beneath their golden porches, all
The rosy lords of that Ambrosial Hall.
Olympus groan'd aghast beneath the sound,
Whereto the throbbing universe all round
Responded with a million echoes wild
Of awful joy.

II.

For lo! the glorious child,
By one transcendent moment's mighty throe,
Full-statured sprang into the new-born glow
Of his superlative godhead. His right hand
Wrench'd from his lustrous orbs the blinding band
That had for ages held their lordly light
From flooding heaven and earth with infinite
And all-transforming splendour. Faint and wan
Wax'd all the lesser lights Olympian
In the sunrise of that surpassing gaze:
Like their own orbs. Mars, with diminisht rays,

Reddening receded to what seem'd at last
A single spot of angry fire in fast
Increasing distance. Like a happy tear
About to fall, Venus, a trembling sphere
All pale in rosy air, descended slow.
Of Phœbus rested nothing but a glow
Of solemn gladness on heaven's serene face.
Even Jove himself, in that expanding space
Love's ever-greatening glory lit, became
No brighter than his own broad star, whose flame
Burns lone on night's far frontier.

III.

In amaze,
Beneath the Face whereon he dared not gaze
The man, prostrated, fell. In whose thrill'd ears
A voice rang, musical as moving spheres :
" The sound of Human Sorrow heard in Heaven
Immortal love to mortal life hath given :
Whereby in grief of life is growth of love.
Arise! On Earth below, in Heaven above,
Part of all creeds, and every creed surviving,
The Ever-loving is the Ever-living.
Heavenly and Human both : which, thro' man's eyes
Forever gazing upward, to Heaven cries,
'Behold me, Father!' and from Heaven anon
Down gazing cries to Earth 'Behold me, Son!'
Arise, and follow where Love leads."

IV.

The man
Arose : and, guided by the Voice, began
To ascend that solemn mountain. Changed was all
Its aspect. Gone the Olympian Festival !
Gone all the rosy revellers ! Rough the road
With raunce and bramble, where once breathed and glow'd
The clear-cupp'd cistus and bright asphodel.
And lo, where last each golden goblet fell,
A grinning scull ! On the sharp summit seem'd,
Where late Olympian Jove's bright throne had beam'd,
Some dim stupendous image, looming thro'
Red morn's dull mist, and lurid in the dew,
Till at its foot the god-led mortal stood :
Then on his brow fell drops of human blood
From a great Cross, wide-arm'd, that o'er him spread.

V.

He shrank, indignant.
Music o'er his head,
Like a light bird, came fluttering. And again,
To that light music lured, in mistlike train,
From rosiest air's remotest inmost deep,
Troop'd—dim and beautiful, as dreams that creep
Under the sweet lids of a sleeping child,
On whose wet lashes tears, tho' reconciled
With trouble soon dismiss'd, are trembling new—
The old Olympians. Wreaths of every hue,

Fresh-pluckt from bowers of never-fading Thought
In Memory's dewiest meadow-deeps, they brought;
Wherewith to deck that darkling Cross. Whereon
The Past's pale blossom-bearers every one,
Each as he came, fresh garlands hung. Till, lo!
The Cross in flowers—the flowers themselves—the flow
Of flower-bearers—all, began to fade
In ever deepening light.

VI.

Love, only, staid.
Yet Love's self changed. Whose form, expanding, seem'd,
To him on whose awed gaze its glory beam'd,
To absorb into itself all things that were.
Heaven's farthest stars were glittering in His hair:
All winds of heaven His breathing loosed or bound:
His voice became an ever-murmuring sound,
The sound of generations of mankind:
Shut in His hand, the nations humm'd: Time twined
About His feet its creeping growths; which took
From Him the life-sap of the leaves that shook
Light shadows from His glory.

VII.

Mute with awe,
And lost in light, Licinius mused. He saw
His own life, suddenly, as when, thro' rain

And streaming tempest, on a blasted plain
An instantaneous sunbeam strikes.

VIII.

Even then,
Even while the vision broaden'd on his ken,
A sudden trumpet sounded as in scorn
From the dark camps.

It was the battle morn.

GENSERIC.

GENSERIC, King of the Vandals, who, having laid waste seven lands,
From Tripolis far as Tangier, from the sea to the Great Desert sands,
Was lord of the Moor and the African,—thirsting anon for new slaughter,
Sail'd out of Carthage, and sail'd o'er the Mediterranean water;
Plunder'd Palermo, seized Sicily, sack'd the Lucanian coast,
And paused, and said, laughing, "Where next?"
Then there came to the Vandal a Ghost
From the Shadowy Land that lies hid and unknown in the Darkness Below,
And answer'd, "To Rome!"
Said the King to the Ghost, "And whose envoy art thou?
Whence art thou? and name me his name that hath sent thee: and say what is thine."
"From far: and His name that hath sent me is God," the Ghost answer'd, "and mine

Was Hannibal once, ere thou wast: and the name that I now
have is Fate.
But arise, and be swift, and return. For God waits, and the
moment is late."
And "I go," said the Vandal. And went.
When at last to the gates he was come,
Loud he knock'd with his fierce iron fist. And full drowsily
answer'd him Rome.
"Who is it that knocketh so loud? Get thee hence. Let
me be. For 'tis late."
"Thou art wanted," cried Genseric. "Open! His name
that hath sent me is Fate,
And mine, who knock late, Retribution."
Rome gave him her glorious things:
The keys she had conquer'd from kingdoms: the crowns she
had wrested from kings:
And Genseric bore them away into Carthage, avenged thus
on Rome,
And paused, and said, laughing, "Where next?"
And again the Ghost answer'd him, "Home!
For now God doth need thee no longer."
"Where leadest thou me by the hand?"
Cried the King to the Ghost. And the Ghost answer'd,
"Into the Shadowy Land."

IRENE.

"YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."
Matth. xxv. 40.

I.

THE moonlight lay like hoar frost on the earth
Outside. But, all within, the marble hearth
Made from its dropping logs of scented wood
A rosy dimness of warm light, to flood
With fervid interchange of gloom and gleam
That gorgeous chamber,—from the mad moonbeam
Curtain'd secure. No other light was there.
The outer halls were silent everywhere.
Midnight. And in the bed where he was born,
I' the Porphyry Chamber at Byzance, outworn
By seventeen years of pleasure without joy,
Not yet a man, albeit no more a boy,
His flusht cheek heavy on the fragrant sheet,
Slept Constantine the Porphyrogenete;
When glided in his mother leonine,
Irene.

II.

She, reluctant to resign
To her own whelp that prey beneath her paw,
The bloody Empire, stealthily 'gan draw
The crimson curtain; with keen ear down-bent
To count the breathings, thick and indolent,
Of her recaptured cub: who, sleeping, smiled,
By visions lewd of folly and lust beguiled.
Anon, she beckon'd to the unshut door:
Whence, crafty-footed, down the glassy floor
Crept to her side (with wither'd features white
Bow'd o'er a trembling lamp) her parasite,
Storax, the lean-lipp'd, low-brow'd Logothete.

III.

"Set the lamp down," the mother mutter'd. "Sweet
Must be his dreams. My son is smiling...see!
Wake him not, Storax!" Then, while softly she
Let fall the curtain, he from out its sheath
Slided his dagger, pusht the flame beneath
The weapon's point, and watch'd with moody eye
The heated metal reddening.
O'er the high
Bed-head (to safeguard sleeping Cæsars, slung
Slant from the golden sculptured cornice) hung
On dismal ebon cross limbs, carven keen
In livid ivory, of a stretch'd-out, lean,
And ever-dying Christ....

IV.

(For, not long since,—
As rapturous Priests remember,—to evince
For God's Church Orthodox her filial zeal,
Irene's righteous regency,—with heel
Set on the heads heretical of all
Iconoclasts, had rescued from their fall
The Images of God—assaulted sore
Erewhile by Antichrist's mad Emperor,
That "hell-born dragon," "the Old Serpent's grub,"
"Black-spotted panther of Beelzebub,"
Whom, being dead now, lodged, too, in hell's flame,
God-fearing folks no longer fear to name
Accurst Copronymus)

V.

. . . His white lips set
Fast with a formidable will, while yet
Storax, who turn'd and turn'd it slowly, scann'd
The reddening steel, Irene's rapid hand,
With restless finger o'er her pucker'd brow
Flitting, made airy crosses in a row.
Her eyes had settled sullenly upon
The superimpending image of God's Son:
And Habit,—that hard mock-bird of the mind,
Whose tongue, to chance-got utterance confined,
Memories by chance recaptured out of place
Set talking out of season,—to the Face

Mechanic response making, "*If thine eye*
Offend thee, pluck it out," she mutter'd. "Ay,
That is sound Gospel," Storax in her ear
Whisper'd. "The thing is white-hot now . . . See here!"
"And I am Empress" . . . hiss'd Irene . . "Smite!"

VI.

The arm'd Armenian on the guard that night
About the palace precincts somnolent,
Where, like a weary beetle, came and went
Across the flinty platform,—else dead-dumb—
The slumbrous city's desultory hum,
Heard, pacing drowsy-cold, (his watch nigh done)
Beneath the stars, thro' shrivelling silence run
A sudden scream, fierce, devilish, agonized,
Of quintessential pain; and all surprised
Started upon the watch,—waiting what sound
Should follow. But that dreadful cry, soon drown'd
In dreadful silence, response none uproused,
Save of an owlish echo half unhoused
Among the moody towers, that down again
With churlish mumblings in her mason'd den
Settled to slumber.
Then the soldier said,
Laughing at the discovery he had made
Of what, to *him* at least, that sound meant, "So!
To-morrow, and the amphoræ shall flow.

In the dread Face!
With fierce and bitter cries
She dasht It sharp against the marble floor,
And bruised It with wild feet.
Still as before
The Eyeless Face implied. . . . "Do what thou wilt
Henceforth, and hug thy gain, or hate thy guilt,
Never shalt thou behold God's eyes."
She snatch'd
And hurl'd It on the smouldering hearth: and watch'd
The embers quicken round It: heap'd up wood,
And made the blaze leap high: and all night stood
Feeding the flame: till all was burn'd away
To ashes.
And ere this was done, the day
Began to dawn.

IX.

Afterwards, she became
One of the world's chief rulers. Her fair name
Was praised in all the churches. God's priests pray'd
God to safeguard the mighty throne she made
Illustrious.
Three times,—in the hippodrome
Once, in the palace once, once 'neath the dome
O' the high cathedral,—the Estates took oath
After this fashion . . . "Witness Christ! we both
Swear, on the Gospels Four, to guard the throne

Of our Liege Lady, Thine anointed one,
Irene, and swear also, bearing leal
Allegiance to her person, for her weal
And in her service, ever to oppose
Our lives against the persons of her foes."
This on the wood of the True Cross they swore.
And their recorded oath, with many more,
Among the relics of the Saintly Dead,
On the main altar was deposited
In St. Sophia.

Four Patricians, proud
So to be seen of the applausive crowd,
Held in their hands the golden reins of four
White horses, pacing in high pomp before
Her festive chariot, when Irene pass'd
Along the loud streets, greeted by the vast
Vociferation of a land's applause.

x.

To all the Roman world she set wise laws.
Men praised her wisdom. Wealth was hers immense.
Men praised her splendour and munificence.
Alms to the poor her hand distributed.
Men praised her bounty. High she held her head
Amid the tempests of a turbulent time.
Men praised her courage. Cruelty and crime
She scourged with scorpions. Men her justice praised.
Gifts to the Church she gave, and altars raised.

In the dread Face!
With fierce and bitter cries
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Gifts to the Church she gave, and altars raised.

Men praised her piety. She in the West
Treaties proposed and embassies addrest
To Charlemagne. She in the East maintain'd
On equal terms alliance undisdain'd
With great Haroun Alraschid. "For," said she,
"We understand each other's worth, We Three."
The world, when speaking of her, said "The Great."

XI.

At last her fortune changed.
For 'twas her fate
To win a worthier title. So, one night,
The eunuchs of her palace,—slaves whose spite
Her power had scorn'd,—conspiring its downfall,
Pluck'd the throne from her : seized her treasures all :
And drave her forth from power and wealth, to be
An exile and a pauper.
Meekly she
Surrender'd what she had so proudly worn,
Rome's Purple. And, retiring from men's scorn
To Mitylene, lived there, lone and poor :
A careworn woman at a cottage door
Spinning for bread.
The world was sad to see
What it had done, then. Men remorsefully
Remember'd, not her many evil deeds,
But her few good ones. For who counts the weeds
In any garden where, tho' desolate,

One rose remains? And, much admiring fate
So bitter borne so blameless of complaint,
The world, when speaking of her said "The Saint."

XII.

And after all these things, at the late end
Of a long life, she died.

XIII.

Then Priests to send
Pilgrims to deck her tomb made haste. They came
Bare-footed, chanting hymns unto her name,
And made a noise of praise above her bones,
Which waked her spirit in the grave.

XIV.

Old tones
Of some glad tune, first heard long years ago,
When to their music life went gladly too,
If heard once more when life, after long years,
Goes not at all, but rests, in him that hears
Awaken thus the wild unwonted spasm
Of life's long-buried old enthusiasm.
Earth under earth, the earthly instinct, raised
By earthly praises in the corpse thus praised,
Return'd to life.

She rose i' the tomb, and said
"Open! and let me forth. I am not dead.

For men yet praise me, and their praises give
My joy thereat assurance that I live."
And the tomb answer'd, in its own dumb way,
"I neither know the living, nor obey
Their voice."
The pious pilgrims above ground,
Their rites perform'd, departing now,—the sound
Of human praise about that tomb wax'd faint,
Then silent.
"Ay," she mused, "a Saint? . . a Saint
Should seek, not men, but God." She stood before
The creviced hinge of the tomb's granite door
And struck it with dead hands, and said again
"Door of the Tomb, since I have done with men,
Show me the way to God."
The sullen door
Answer'd, "I am the Door o' the Tomb. No more.
Find thou the way."

XV.

Even then, an awful light,
Not of this world, thro' chink and crevice (bright
With brightness as of burning fire that turns
Whatever thing the burning of it burns
Into its sifted elemental worth:
Substance to spirit, ashes unto earth)
Smote all the inner darkness where she stood.

XVI.

Whereby she saw, outstretch'd upon the rood
The Image of the Christ (by Human Faith
Placed there in token of life's trust in death),
And on her soul the sudden memory came
Like hope . . . "I am The Way!"
Who said the same
Was There i' the Tomb.
To Whom she, kneeling, said
"Teach me, O Christ (if I, indeed, be dead)
The way . . . Thou seest . . . ."
A Voice replied "To Me,
Woman, give back mine eyes that I may see!"
She dared not answer: dared not gaze upon
The Face Above.

XVII.

That moment's light was gone
Even as it came. Darkness return'd.
The rest,
Hid in that darkness, never shall be guess'd.

END OF BOOK III.

BOOK IV.

THE SCROLL AND ITS INTERPRETERS.

"εἴπερ λόγος προσελθὼν τῇ ὕλῃ σῶμα ποιεῖ, οὐδαμόθεν δ' ἂν προσέλθοι ὁγος, ἢ παρὰ ψυχῆς."—Plotinus ii. 25.—*περὶ ἀθανασίας ψυχῆς.*

THE SCROLL

AND ITS INTERPRETERS.

The garden of a villa near Alexandria, overlooking the sea. Noon.
ZOZOMEN, EUPHORBOS, *and* BEN ENOCH, *meeting each other.*

ZOZOMEN.

Welcome, Euphorbos! Welcome, learnèd Jew!

EUPHORBOS *and* BEN ENOCH.

Zozomen, hail!

ZOZOMEN.

Here, while we keep in view
The striving city, we evade the strife
Which, pleased, we witness. In the webs of life
Hark to the hum of those unhappy swarms
That cannot disengage their legs and arms
From out the meshes, more than flies that sing,
Caught by the crafty many-handed thing

That in the unperceived impalpable snare
Squats, spins, spies, and devours.

EUPHORBOS.

Ay, the air
Of Summer's strongest noon is ever cool
Under these myrtle boughs,—our sylvan school.
Here breathe we Spring, while, all beneath our gaze,
The grass burns white against the stubborn blaze,
And the bruised day on rocky anvils steams,
Beat by incessant strokes of strong sunbeams.

ZOZOMEN.

Look yonder, friends, and laugh to see those four
Brown wretches sweating down the stifled shore,
To where, between the wharves, the sea-folk swarm
Round yonder galley; each with brawny arm
And straining neck outthrust, on bended back
Uppropping as he plods, his heavy pack
Of parti-colour'd stuff. I oft have stood
Still by the hour, and in like mirthful mood,
To watch brown beetles o'er a sandy road
Uprolling stoutly each his cumbrous load,
—(White balls of dust, they pack their eggs therein,
I fancy)—each with hairy chest and chin
Smother'd and choking 'neath the earthy globe
It costs so much to stir so feebly. Probe

The satisfaction which it causes you
(Standing in midst of their minute ado)
To watch these creatures toiling, and you'll find
It comes not from superior strength of mind
So much, nor strength of body, as from these
Converted into consciousness of ease
By the supreme disdain with which you view
The *thing* that tasks the toiling, moiling crew.
Your nothing done, because of much perceived,
Is worth more, doubtless, than the much achieved
Towards their little seen, by creatures born
Beneath you, whom benignantly you scorn
Too much to hurt or help them.

BEN ENOCH.

The chief gain
Of life is, certes, theirs that can abstain,
And stand apart. Man first grows something, then
When first he separates himself from men.
Life's lowest and least choice results we know
And recognise in what the Many do
Together: life's augustest grace alone
Is witness'd in the achievement of the One.
Bees, emmets, beavers, to each other seem
As helpful, in their life's collective scheme,
As men to men. In this alone alone doth lie
Man's difference from the beasts: that man saith "I,"
Naming himself, but those "We" only.

EUPHORBOS.

Well,
The insects yet do yonder slaves excel.
For they (the insects at their toil) at least
Toil for themselves, and furnish their own feast.
But those men toil for others, whom, indeed,
They know not, or not love. Fagg'd hands that feed
Mouths not their own. True, Zozomen (alack
That so it is !), well-pleased, the sense comes back
From chance employment on such dusty scene,
To find meanwhile, among these branches green,
His fellow senses, in full ease, supplied
By cool sounds and sweet smells with all the pride
Of a most perfect idleness. But see !
The white half-moon, by yonder old pine tree,
In keener curve of clearer crescent now
Bites the blue air. Time to begin, I trow !
And Enoch brings us treasures in his sleeve.
Is it the scroll, Ben Enoch ?

BEN ENOCH.

By your leave.
My mother's great-great-grandsire, as you know,
In your renown'd Librarium, long ago,
Had charge of those three chambers, where were stored
The Hebrew and Assyrian rolls. The sword
Of the first Cæsar on this city lay
Not lightly : but ere Rome's revolted prey,

Recaptured thus, her wrath was pastured on,
This great-great-grandsire of my mother, gone
To Thebes, in search of knowledge,—his life's end,
Was by an old Egyptian seer, his friend,
Forewarn'd of what was doing. Wherefore he
Return'd not, knowing that which was to be.
And in the farthest East he died at last,
Leaving this scroll. Which to explain surpass'd
Even his skill, though least among the seers
He was not. Natheless I, nigh fourscore years
Searching out truth, have in myself found light
Whereby to see, and set in all men's sight,
The meaning of this mystery. It is writ
All in straight strokes, like thorns. Perusing it,
I find the sense runs, not alone from left
To right, but right to left, as in a weft
Of cross-spun threads, and also vertical:
The text alliterated, duplex, all
Instinct with double import; and the tongue
That antique Syrian which survives among
Some parts of Ezra's scripture, where he cites
The letter which the Persic king indites.
Such is the text. Upon the marge thereof
I find a commentary cramp and tough
In Hebrew with no vowel points, by a hand
Unknown, which I surmise Ben Shishak's. And
All this I have unriddled, and writ out,
—The essence of it,—not the form, no doubt;

For all made up of sounds too volatile
For transmutation is the antique style :
. . . . Even your elastic language locks not these
In its clear limbec, whence their light troop flees
In brilliance, bursting swift the brittle bond,
To fade i' the boundless infinite beyond,
Dispersed like falling stars. But what I deem,—
Nay, hold for certain,—the substantial theme
Of thought that underlies the illusive text,
Here in my hand I hold,—plain, unperplext,
Set forth in current Greek.

EUPHORBOS *and* ZOZOMEN.

Read, prithee read,
Ben Enoch !

BEN ENOCH.

Then, to please you . . . Since, indeed,
I know that, not alone, in earlier age,
Milesian Thales, and that Samian sage,
Anaximander, and Parmenides,
But not long since, Plotinus, and with these
(Not to name all those Greeks that follow them)
Latins no few, who tho' of Rome, condemn
No less the dull inapprehensive scorn
Of their o'erweening West for Knowledge born
Beyond the palms, before the pyramids,

Where Earth's first Morn first oped her ardent lids,
Were fain to slake their thirst of things divine
At that same urn whence now I pour this wine
O' the old bright East. . . . . .

EUPHORBOS *and* ZOZOMEN.

Read, Enoch! read to us
The parchment with less preface.

BEN ENOCH.

Well then, thus:

I.

(*He reads.*)

" In the Beginning, God, the Unbegun,
(Dread Doer of the Deed that's never Done!)
Made Matter: that the glory of His pure
Perfection, thro' this element obscure
Passing, and being thereby, as it were,
Temper'd to what the strength of souls can bear,
Might make rich colours in the lives of men,
His cared-for, but yet-unborn, children.

II.

" Then
What He had made God gave unto The Night,
To keep till He reclaim'd it.

III.

" Far from Light

Night took, and hid, God's gift. And spread thereon
Her mantle, murmuring 'Mine!' And slept.

IV.

"Anon
The æons of the Day that hath no rise
Nor setting in the scope of mortal eyes
Flow'd round about the circle of God's Will,
I' the orbit of Eternity.

V.

"Until
The Word,—which is the perfect probola
Of Power, forth issuing from the depths of Day,
Summon'd The Night to God to render back
What God had made.

VI.

"Under Night's mantle black
The embryons heard, and shudder'd thro' and thro.

VII.

"Night answer'd with the everlasting No
Of nothing-knowing Silence. And outspread
Her sullen solitary wings, and fled
Further, and further from the Light, before
The Voice of God.

VIII.

"In her brute heart she bore
Natheless, the Word, that cried inexorable
'Obey!' whereto Night answer'd mute 'Compel!'

IX.

"So that by disobedience she obey'd,
Not knowing. Unintelligently made
By lawless deed the lawful instrument
Of love she loved not. For where'er she went
Deeper, and deeper, with her went her doom,
—To bring about God's glory in the gloom:
Flying with what she fled from unaware,
Compell'd in her inconscious breast to bear
The conscious burthen of the utter'd Word,
Whose syllables are acts.

X.

"Stark Matter stirr'd,
Put forth a pining impulse, and 'gan rouse
Revolt all round its gloomy prison-house,
Yearning to get back to the hand of Him
That made it. Fitful in each monstrous limb
The thick life throbb'd, the formidable face
Twitch'd, and the enormous frame in helpless case
Heaved: for, not dead, but dreaming heavily,
The giant infant breathed. But blind of eye,
Callous of ear, Darkness with Silence old

Crouch'd by the cradle ; and their dismal hold
Held fast Night's prey, and theirs.

XI.

"To break whose thrall,
He that is All in One, being One in All,
Raised up Auxiliar Forces : they that be,
Since man hath been, dwellers on earth, in sea,
And in the fire, the air ; tho' whence of old
These first had birth not even was it told
To Moses on the mountain. This alone
Is certain : not among the Angels known
Nor Elohim ; but rather of this earth,
Or elsewhere under Heaven had these their birth."

(*He says.*)

Rabbi Ben Shishak thinks, and I with him,
These should be number'd of those Teraphim,
—Inferior forces, visible to man,
Of the Invisible Will,—the Syrian
Worshipp'd as gods ; whose images, when she
With Jacob fled to Gilead, privily
Rachel from Laban stole.

(*He reads.*)

XII.

"Then forth, at length,
To conflict came he that in subtle strength
Is mightiest of those ministers that serve

The Maker's Will in Matter. Every nerve
O' the intense Nature vibrated beneath
His burning impulse when, as sword from sheath,
Forth flash'd the Spirit of Fire unto his aim;
Impetuous, thunder-bolted, fledged with flame.

XIII.

"He, that himself is never still, whose pride
Of prowess is not ever satisfied,
In his immitigable scorn of rest,
With searching challenge to swift Change addrest,
To do his bidding on the dangerous Deep
Roused to reluctant motion from dull sleep
Full many more and mighty ones beside,
In warfare, waged on Night, with him allied;
Whereby Night's realm was shaked and sunder'd thro'
With an interminable to and fro.
For whatsoe'er that Spirit loathes, or loves,
To seek, or shun, his ardent contact, *moves.*

XIV.

"To run whose errands then uprose the Wind,
That sightless seeker of what none shall find,
And moved on the vext Deep, and strove with might
To rend the vesture vast o' the antique Night.

XV.

"Albeit in vain. For everywhere the deep

Enduring Darkness,—steadfast, even as Sleep
Is steadfast round about, above, and under
The tumult of some Dream that cannot sunder
The slumber it makes terrible,—clung fast.
And thro' the hollow dark the whirlwind pass'd,
As a thought passes thro' a soul,—which, go
Where'er it will, that soul still holds. Even so
The darkness held the whirlwind. And Night's pall
Floated thereon, forever, over all.

XVI.

"Then roll'd the Waters; labouring to the light
That was not: struck the stubborn sides of Night,
And grovell'd: for the wilful-hearted world
Of waters all its frenzied forces hurl'd,
To meet but blind bewildering reverse,
Against the solid of the universe:
And hung the hissing torrent on the arch
Of hollows drench'd, wherethro' the dismal march
Of Deluge, bellowing, burst, and, with cold claw
Of clammy greed, into the hungry maw
Of monstrous movement scraped the confused wrecks
Of broken opposition. But, to vex
Itself in vain, the purblind element,
A rude and ravenous monster, came and went;
And, mad, with uncongenial substance mix'd,
Disorder'd worse disorder wild; unfix'd
The hinges of the gateways of the floods,

And shifted their far-fleeting solitudes
Endlessly to no end.

XVII.

"For, evermore,
The enormous Night, still motionless on shore,
Still moving upon sea, was everywhere:
Inexorable, ignorant, unaware,
But mistress still of Matter.

XVIII.

"Last, in wrath
Forth rush'd Fire's self upon his reckless path.
Night's mutilated mantle kindled, shrank,
Suck'd up the seething heat, and rose and sank
Tormented, yet tenacious. For, where'er
The scorching Spirit slid thro', did Night repair
With instantaneously-returning dark
Her ravaged shade. As when spark after spark
Runs over trembling tinder; which anon
To every fibre whence the flame hath gone
Doth,—tho' calcined, yet unconsumed,—restore
The swift-reverting blackness as before.
But thro' the havoc and the breach he wrought,
In rush'd the audacious Force, intense as thought,
Right to the core of what Night strove to hide.
There,—swallow'd soon in the abysmal tide
Of Darkness,—caught a prisoner by the thing

He came to capture,—made, not Matter's king,
But Matter's slave,—thereafter, might not he
From this material any more be free.
Tho', discontented, unresign'd to abide
Fetter'd in darkness and to cold allied,
The radiant captive strove, till Night was fain,
Cramp'd, and diminish'd of her dismal reign,
To camp far off upon the cloudy tract,
Half conquer'd, in a sort of sullen pact
With light she loved not."

(*He says.*) XIX.

Thus, the Principle
Of Fire, materialised, and made to dwell
Distributed in all things,—being thereby
In each confounded irrecoverably,
To all things, interpenetrating each,
Gave his own leaping life; that yearns to reach
Upward, and outward.

(*He reads.*)

XX.

"From the depths uprose
Gaping volcanos, that with violent throes
Gasp'd against heaven. The strong earthquake's spasm
Jarr'd underneath; and split from chasm to chasm
The granite flanks of dizzy hills and isles,
And promontories rock'd on tottering piles.

About whose base the round sea, rolling, went
To wrap the world with its blue element,
Lock'd in the calm light of the crystal air.
The buried Force, still seeking everywhere
Fresh forms of freedom in new layers of life,
Still from each hot and hidden seedling, rife
With the enraptured consciousness of power,
Put forth fantastic pomps of plant and flower
To deck the palace of his new-born world.

XXI.

"Then first the centenary palm unfurl'd
Broad in blue air his emerald diadem,
And throng'd with feathery shafts his quiver'd stem.
Then spread the pillar'd plantain, a dim house
Of happy leaves, with shadows populous.
Then first in blaze of bloom the aloe burst
Bold-faced, and sank, and rose renew'd. Then first
Slant stoop'd the cedars from their mountain height.
And over all the lands, in lone delight,
The forests murmuring to themselves, the seas
Sounding together, and the melodies
Of old Earth's morning song made music sweet;
Whereto the white stars, dancing with faint feet
Far off, rejoiced in golden companies.

XXII.

"And still, in glad and serious self-surprise,

The conscious being of the beauteous world,
With breath on breath, thro' bloom on bloom, unfurl'd,
Grew fair, and fairer, gathering grace, from high
To higher life.

XXIII.

"Wings wander'd the warm sky.
The eagle from his mountain pinnacle
Faced the full sun, his neighbour; proud to dwell
Alone in light. The brooding vulture bald
Peer'd out of unsunn'd crags. The curlew call'd
From breezy bays. Crop-full in marshy haunts
Stalk'd the high-shoulder'd pouch-beak'd cormorants.
The stilted stork to guard her airy nest
Stood sentinel. Down flash'd with flamy breast
The red flamingo. Scream'd the scornful jay
The trotting ostrich scudded swift away.
Cold-coated wyverns flapp'd with spiky wing
Waste fens, in air forlornly wayfaring.
And merry bills wax'd loud in leafy groves.

XXIV.

"The briny sounds began to swarm with droves
Of silent finny shapes, whose startled eyes
Peruse the serious deeps in dim surprise.
The tunny, with his troop of uncouth kin,
Tumbled all night in moony deeps. The thin
Flat-finger'd starfish on the shelly sand

Sunn'd his slow life, or launch'd him loose from land,
Buoy'd on blotch'd tangles of the salt sea-moss.
Grey squadrons of adventurous crabs across
Wind-beaten beaches crawl'd. I' the hollow stone
The hermit limpit lived his life alone.
Where blush'd the coral branch, with unshut eye
Xiphias, in silentness, sail'd, sworded, by.

XXV.

"Nor less the green earth's populace rejoiced,
Each after his own fashion. The hoarse-voiced
Hyæna laugh'd at nothing all night long
In lonesome lands below the moon: the strong
Unwieldy unicorns, about the brink
Of reedy rivers trampling, troop'd to drink:
The jumping gerboa in her wallet warm'd
Her suckling brood with beaded eyes: long-arm'd
The lean ape chatter'd on the branch, and swung:
Gamboll'd the frolick squirrel: gaily rung
With spleenful neighings many a herded lawn
Of happy grass, where roam'd at dewy dawn
The wanton horses: with embattled mane,
A citadel of strength, in grave disdain,
Majestic march'd the lion: lissom leapt,
Or crouch'd, the wary tiger: cumbrous stept
The mountainous elephant: on sandy couch
Supine beneath the palm, with provender'd pouch,
Mused the mild camel at mid-noon.

XXVI.

"The things
That sail on sunny air, with splendid wings,
Sparkled and humm'd: the frugal emmets troop'd
To store their sandy citadel: moles scoop'd
Blind chambers in the clod: the scorpion sprawl'd
At ease i' the hollow wood: in patience crawl'd
The many-colour'd caterpillars: bees,
The busy builders, around resinous trees
Sung ardent in the shade: the sleek smooth-oil'd
And silvery-spotted serpent, slumbrous, coil'd
In grassy twine of tangled growths: and swift
Darted the vivid lizard to her rift.

XXVII.

"For swimming thing to creeping thing was changed,
And creeping thing to flying. Life rose, and ranged
Like ripples of running water in the sun,
Whose mirths are many, but their movement one.
And every creature, doing what the need
Of its own nature prompted—in that deed
Delighting—did by its particular joy
Make more the general felicity:
And, living its own life in great or small,
Promote, in part, life's purpose, summ'd in all:
As units in a scale of numbers stand
So placed that each gives out on either hand
His value to all others."

(*He says.*)

I opine
The text implies that all which was, in fine,
On each particular part imperative,
As Power's tributary, to contrive
For contribution to the Life o' the Whole
(Which, tho' in many bodies, is one soul)
Was by the separate will that works alone
In each part (conscious solely of its own
Especial want or purpose, whatsoe'er
That chance to be) accorded, as it were,
In prosecution of its proper joy,
Serving itself. Moreover, that the employ
Of every function requisite thereto
Was so contrived, in all God's creatures do,
As that the creature's action should produce
Pleasure,—the aim and stimulant of Use,
The motive of Life's movement. You would say
Life, wanting such things done, devised this way
Of winning all that lives to serve her end,
Serving its own ;—by joy in means that mend
The salutary sense of some distress,
Which is dictatress of that happiness
The creature's faculties were form'd to find.
And therefore man, that is in one combined
Both animal and intellectual,
Most specially behoves it that he shall
Secure the complex happiness of each:

Whose business, for this reason, is to teach
Himself, first to imagine and conceive
The highest happiness, and next to leave
To his soul's scorn all happiness that seems
A lesser happiness than that he deems
The highest: sparing piecemeal to employ
His faculties on fragmentary joy.
Since great joy must, greatly to be enjoy'd,
Be nourish'd upon lesser joys destroy'd.
I also deem they err who hold that Good
Is Life's aim: rather is it—to my mood—
Life's aim's benign condition: for Life's aim,
In fact, is simply Happiness. The same
Is Good i' the consequence. I say again
What of Life's end, if all the means were pain?
What if rest, sustenance, activity
Were needful and yet hateful? if the eye,
Compell'd to see, were scorch'd by sight? the ear
Made sore by sound, tho' still required to hear?
And Life's necessities imposed, in scorn,
Not love, a curse to sense? The insect born,
Even while I speak, where yon stark aloes throw
Their scanty shades,—is born with skill to know
The food, and where to find the food, he needs.
What if 'twere otherwise? The leaf that feeds
Might all as well destroy him. It does not.
Wherefore, perceiving how this Life doth plot
To bring her ends round,—get herself obeyed,—

By ministering to all that she hath made
To be her minister in turn,—what care,
What shrewdly-shaped contrivance everywhere,
—Seeing, I say, her means all good, I must
Infer the end good also,—to be just.
Albeit not failing to observe, in all,
The means of pleasure made conditional
To a capacity for pain as well.
A possible Heaven and a possible Hell
In the employment of all faculties:
Mysterious Ezdads, welcome to the wise,
Tho' fearful to the fool. One asks me, Why
Is Evil everywhere? and I reply,
That everywhere there may be growth of Good.
Would I forego that growth, even if I could?
By no means. I resume the text.

(*He reads.*)

XXVIII.

"There were
Two beings—of the realm that is not air,
But form'd of finer element afar,
Which floweth round about 'twixt star and star,
And feeds with heat and light all orbs we view
Thro' æther rolling.

XXIX.

"Brothers were they, two:

Loving each other, living in God's love,
As in them God's love liveth: born above
Mortality: of burning Essence bright:
One all pure heat; the other all pure light:
Whose nature may be realised by men
Vaguely—in moments rare—and only then
When, by the Thinking-power upward brought,
Or by the Feeling outward, in his thought
Or his emotion, man approaches close
To Truth,—knows what he loves, loves what he knows.

XXX.

"Of this etherial and seraphic Twain
The names be Zefyr, Zafyr..."

(*He says.*)

I retain
The antique nomenclature, as most fit.
Tho', for the meaning,—could one render it
In the Greek tongue, 'twere simpler doubtlessly
To hellenise what these two names imply,
(If my conjecture be not all at loss)
Calling them Thermos and Selasphoros.
He that illumes of him that warms being brother-
Spirits,—of Wisdom one, of Love the other.

(*He reads.*)

XXXI.

"Now Zefyr, looking down the light of God,

Beheld this earth ; and saw it the abode
Of beings beauteous, but unconscious yet
Of beauty : each life limited, and set
Apart from That which is the Life of All,
Shut in itself ; so, fixt from rise or fall
To its own type of beauty :—there the end
And bourne of all its being.

XXXII.

"Strong to rend
And roam, the lion : bright in bloom, the rose,
And sweet in odour : where the water flows
Swift slides the fish : the bird in buoyant air
Springs blithe : each creature acting unaware
Of all the beauty in all others, meant
Mixt with its own, to perfect the content
Of the Creator in His creatures all.

XXXIII.

" But, what if it were possible to call
And gather up into some central soul
(The conscious consummation of the whole)
All separate strengths and beauties stored in each ?
Some crowning nature graced with force to reach
Out of itself on all sides round,—return
Into itself anon,—and so discern
Its fit relation to Life's other parts ;
Whereto, in each, Life tends, wherefrom it starts ;

The fit relation of all parts to it ;
And last its own, and their, relation fit
To the One wherefrom all come, whereto all tend,
In Whom is the beginning and the end ?

XXXIV.

" Could some such soul beget itself,—suppose,—
The lion's strength, the beauty of the rose,
The joy that in the sea-born creature swims
The deep, the bird's delight that soars and skims
The boundless heavens ;—by power in it, as 'twere,
To put its proper life forth everywhere
Beyond itself, and bring it back again
Triumphant, with a tributary train
Of other lives, made captive to its own
By the imagining of what alone
Sense notices, but knows not.....

XXXV.

" Such a being
Might be i' the world the Eye of Nature, seeing
Before and after. Consecrating so
All creatures in one creature, crown'd, below,
As the world's seer, conspicuous might he tand
'Twixt Earth and Heaven, upholding in his hand
The censer of the praise of all, encreast
By his own joy therein : the great High Priest
Of all God's creatures before God!

XXXVI.

"'Twere well.'

So Zefyr deem'd.

XXXVII.

"Whereat, on him there fell
Thro' all the solemn and symphonious psalm
Of seraphim that sing 'twixt palm and palm
Of Paradise, a sadness, soft, profound,
As of a silence hid within a sound.

XXXVIII.

"Zafyr, perceiving that, where'er they went
Together, Zefyr's brow was downward bent,
Not upward, as of old, in council drew
His brother forth.

XXXIX.

"'Twas when the evening dew
Was on the silent summer woods, the Star
Of Even smiling fair, serene, and far
Over the lone bright lands and waters wide
Of the young world. All-spying, unespied
Of beast or bird, in midst of bird and beast,
On a mountain summit in the furthest East
These Spirits sat in converse.

XL.

" Zefyr said
To Zafyr, answering as the heart to the head
Makes answer prompt, with no dull need of speech,
In some full-natured man :

XLI.

" ' Look forth ! and reach
With me, where runs my thought around the rim
Of this green world, that in the light of Him
That made it, lyeth sleeping with shut eye
And but half-beating heart ; not knowing why
It is, nor in whose Hand it lieth there.
How fair to spiritual sight ! so fair
That we, God's Seraphs, from our sphere descend
To bathe us in its beauty, and so send
The fuller strain of a refreshen'd praise
To Him that made, and grants it to our gaze.

XLII.

" ' And yet how ignorant ! how blind ! so blind
Of being, that,—albeit we, that wind
Where'er the Maker's Will thro' Matter moves,
Delight, therewith, to wander these warm groves,
Or from the meditative mountain tops
At morn or even, when the sweet light drops
Or rises, watch the wondrous going on
Of God's great work therein,—means hath it none,

Nor knowledge, nor desire of any way
To speak with us, to answer what we say,
Rise and respond to that supernal sphere
Whereto, not knowing this, it lieth so near.
Of it we know: it knoweth not of us.

XLIII.

"'What keeps the beauteous exile cancell'd thus
From all communion with the Life that's whole
In Spirit only? Surely 'tis a soul
Yet wanting.'

XLIV.

"Then, an answer from Above
Was utter'd unto Zefyr: 'Spirit of Love
That lookest downward, to all souls of Mine
That, looking, loving, downward,—as doth thine,—
Love that which is beneath them, it is given
To follow where love leadeth: down from Heaven
To Earth, from Earth to Hell: and there, made one
With what they love, to employ their love thereon,
Living their life therein. That love may so
Fill all creation, up and down. Whereto
Is this condition fixt: That, never more
The loftier nature may its life restore,
Nor place resume, at that first point assign'd
Its process in My purpose, till it find
Strength in itself to uplift there,—not alone

Itself,—but, with itself, that lowlier one
Whereto its love allies it. If in this
It triumph, then the sphere it soars to is
Diviner, loftier, lovelier than before;
Enlarged by life, not single any more,
But twofold. For, what strength the spirit needs
To painfully recover, by slow deeds
Accumulated from the clutch of Time
And Circumstance, in action, that sublime
First starting-point of Love's self-sought career,
Impels its upward impulse to a sphere
Superior even to that which, in descent,
It for Love's sake surrender'd. In the event
Such spirits, My participators, win
At the Right Hand of Greatness, highest within
High Heaven's secret sanctuary, a throne
Reserved for those Experiences alone
That have advanced My Purpose: which doth move
Not only to create, but to improve
Life in the highest and lowest,—life in all:
Whereof the progress is perpetual.
But if the lord o' the loftier sphere do fail,
Bound to base engines, upward to prevail
With the low consort of his choice, twofold
Shall be his failure; failing to uphold
Himself where first he 'lighted from above,
And failing to uplift what he doth love;
And they shall sink together. And, because

What Is is infinite, all power, that draws
Upward or downward, urges up or down
Whate'er it meets with and can make its own,
Forever and forever.'

XLV.

"Zefyr heard
Glowing: and answer'd, 'Good, O Lord, Thy word
To him that hears it, ever! Let mine be
The task with Matter to return to Thee.'

XLVI.

"But Zafyr cried, 'O Brother, go not thou!
What of the load laid on thee canst thou know?
Or of thy power to lift it from beneath?
Behold! it lieth, sleeping in the breath
Of its own beauty, as thyself hast said,
This world, whose blind brute heart-without-a-head
Dreameth not aught between itself and God.
Once wake it,—make it 'ware that in the sod,
Now smiling all unconscious, stirs a soul,
And will not Matter murtherously dole
To such a troublous tenant,—if not death,—
Pain, dreadfully prolong'd on every breath
That troubles Matter? What Earth's dwellers be
Is best unbetter'd. Bid such beings see
A life above them, better than their own,
—A constantly-receding splendour shown

Never to be secured—a point i' the play
Of power, perpetually drawn away,
Albeit perpetually present still
To life's unsatisfied pursuit—how ill
Even to themselves must all they be and do
Then seem, confronted with the maddening view
Of such a prospect, endlessly at hand,
Endlessly distant. What contrivance, plann'd
For pain, more potent than such gift, whereby
The Better seen must needs incessantly
Condemn the Good possess'd?'

XLVII.

"Zefyr, meanwhile,
Saw, watching wistful with a serious smile,
Among her lucid orbs, the pallid Night
Returning softly, in sad peace with light,
Over the waters to the west: and said—

XLVIII.

"'Lo, everywhere, tho' pent and prostrated,
How Fire, forerunner of the force in me,
Hath vindicated in his own degree
A noble nature in base circumstance;
Whose very pain doth yet his power enhance!
What was this world, ere in it waken'd those
Stupendous pangs, those passionate birth-throes
Of Beauty, the predestined fruit of Power?

Even to make possible yon bell-prankt flower
That trembles sweet i' the solitary air,
What earthquakes quicken'd, what mad mountains were
Cast up, crusht down: of whose so difficult
And dismal labour, lo, the last result,
—A little flower that knows not its own worth!
Ay, but the flower's mere beauty wins to earth
A Seraph. What, now, if that Seraph's heart,
Hid in this world, had place to play its part,
Express its passion, vent its vehemence?
What—of a nature nobler, more intense,
More beautiful, more complex, more complete—
Might rise therefrom the gaze of God to greet?
Perchance, some lovelier flower, of statelier life,
Sprung, not from Matter's toil, but Spirit's strife,
Might, breathing beauty from its native sod,
Win down to earth,—no seraph, but a god!
Beloved, I descend. I shall return.'

XLIX.

"'When?'

"'When God wills. I know not. I shall learn.'

"'Too late, perchance. Thou goest alone?'

"'Not lonely.

Strong helpmates have I with me.'

"'Whom?'

L.

"'Two only:

Faith-in-the-Future, Memory-of-the-Past.
And, doubt not, these Two shall beget me fast
New families of Spirits, born to know
(God granting) whence I am, whither I go:
Poets, and Martyrs. But, since I must needs
Pass lone from where thy placid Essence feeds
Its intellectual life, to lower forms,
Thee, Brother, thee,—tho' housed in dust, with worms,
Still let me feel not far,—where'er perchance,
Cramp'd in cold clasp of clay-born Circumstance,
I, from my new probationary toil,
Look upward with the love earth cannot soil;
—Still as of old, dear Spirit, in our august
And grand communion, lifting, tho' from dust,
Looks that in thine the love that lights them now
Shall find unchanged! And, if God's grace allow
This long-pent passion to attain in time
Some eminence of Nature, more sublime
Than Earth yet holds,—there, Spirit, if that may be,
Stoop thou to meet me, who shall rise to thee,
Nor wholly miss thee, where I soon must live,
I' the myriad moulds God doth to Matter give,
Wherein life beats: therewith my course pursue
Trusting to feeble faculties: renew
Full many times a patient purpose oft
Frustrate: and labour to the light aloft
By many darkling, many devious, ways:
And breathe, perchance in pain, vext hymns of praise

Thro' harshest instruments. Thou, therefore, be
Wherever I at length may lift to thee,
In some yet unborn being, eye or ear
Appealing for communion. I shall hear
Thy voice, and see the beauty of thy face,
And comfort me. Thereby shall some new Race
Take note that Heaven is glad of Earth's endeavour,
And Spirit doth to Spirit answer ever!'

LI.

"And Zafyr, sorrowing: 'Wheresoe'er thou art,
Trust me, my being must with thine take part,
Dear Spirit, with thine my hope, with thine my will!
And Zafyr shall to Zefyr answer still,
Prompt as of old, and clear as chord to chord
Of Heaven's mid-music, if new forms afford
To ancient forces their familiar play
Of interchange, Love's mandate to obey.'

LII.

"Then Zafyr's kiss thro' Zefyr's being stole
Burningly. And behold! a living soul
In Matter" . . .

(*He says.*)

Something from the text is lost
Which to recover, the vain hope hath cost
To me much labour, long research, and some

Discomfiture; for not the palindrome
Nor yet the comment, after or before,
Aids my distress'd conjecture to restore
The perisht page I still am searching for.

(*He reads.*)

. . . "Night answer'd to her august visitor
'Spirit, my consciousness is made confused
By cross experience, and a sense, unused,
Of wants, to me not welcome. This I know:
That all things serve The All—I, even as thou.
Spirit, I know that Matter is His child.
But Matter's nurse am I. For thus He will'd.
And me the infant knows and answers . . . see! . . .
Not knowing yet its Father. If to thee
'Twill answer,—try! I know not. Yet I know
Many, and mighty ones, have been ere thou:
Who came to mock, and still remain to mourn.'"

(*He says.*)

Here also is the cryptic writing torn
To my much sorrow. It continues thus.

* * * * *

"After that time the Earth wax'd populous
With pageantries of prouder life, improved
By wider play of worthier power: which moved
Majestic in the forward march of Fate,

Thro' statelier periods of more intricate
Contrivance, with superior pomp. Erect
Of stature, and serene of intellect,
The august procession to a glorious goal
Rose, and confronting heaven with human soul,
Matter, self-conscious, to emerge began
Forth from the merely mammal into Man.

LIII.

"Thus, at the last, appear'd Humanity.
Whereto was given the hand of a man, thereby
To imitate the thought of an angel: fit
And supple slave o' the spirit that doth sit
Within it, ruling it: made lord and king
Of all Earth's tribes, that to the governing
Of man were given; since, in man's nature, theirs
Is gathered up, and given forth.

LIV.

"Vast stairs
Of various range, ascending to some shrine
Wherein a God is worshipt, so combine
With the whole fabric's purpose.
From below,
Who sees, up their thick-trodden labyrinth, go,
Pushing or pusht, the multitudes betwixt,

The statues and the symbols each side fixt,
Perceives not more in those throng'd temple stairs
Than that each, graced with its own sculpture, bears
In its own beauty its own import plain.
But he that, mounting up them, doth attain
The god-like Image on the glorious height,
Where all parts of the Maker's plan unite
Their several uses, must perceive anon
The Temple and the Temple-stairs be one."

(*He says.*)

Friends, 'tis well known to you, what from of old
Our Rabbins held, as still our Rabbins hold,
That, even as in Noë's ark combined
Lived, not alone the whole of human kind,
But also all the creatures that God chose
For patterns and progenitors of those
Which should be after, when He loosed the flood;
So also lived in Adam's life the brood,
Not only of all generations then
Yet unborn, and all families of men,
But also all the lower lives of earth,
All creatures whose creation by man's birth
Was bound together, and in contact brought
With Spirit by the motions of man's thought.
Since man's thought lends a soul to everything
That man's thought lives in. Therefore is he king
Of all the creatures.

(*He reads.*)

LV.

"Thus man's consciousness
Was troubled by the sense of More and Less.
And, even as one that bears a dubious name,
Born of high lineage, yet the child of shame,
Sprung from a monarch's loins, albeit the fruit
Of a slave's womb; so, kindred to the brute,
Yet conscious of an angel ancestry,
Man walk'd his vassal world with restless eye,
Now turn'd impatient, or in proud self-scorn,
On his low native dust, now raised forlorn
In vext desire to his high native skies.

LVI.

"Now, therefore, Zefyr, gazing through man's eyes,
Sought his kin Seraph: from whose bright embrace
Was born a nobler and a mightier Race,
—Mightier than man's,—which man himself obeys,—
Of beings for whose service in all ways,
And sustenance, man's race was made.

LVII.

"For These,
Which are man's lords, using man's life to please
Their purpose, as man uses, to his own,
Earth's lower lives, whereof dominion
To him in turn is given, are, indeed,
Scarce bound to Matter by mere bodily need,

As man is ; but have power upon man's mind
To make it ply whatever task they find
Fit for their purpose ; mastering Man, as he,
For their sakes, masters Matter.

LVIII.

"These, then, be
The world's essential substances. To whom
Man's life is, from its cradle to its tomb,
Subordinated : unto whom man gives
The best part of his being : whom he lives
To serve, and perishes to please."

(*He says.*)

Thus far
The text. The comment here . . . .

(*Reads.*)

"For men's lives are
To these as sustenance. Mark how, of old,
Men held what I, alone of moderns, hold,"

(*Says.*)

Ben Shishak's known philosophy in this
I recognise, and know the gloss for his.

(*Reads.*)

"Namely : that this thrice-complicated world,
Whereof man stands i' the centre, holds enfurl'd,

And superposed as 'twere, three orbs distinct
Of Life. Each diverse, tho' together linkt
By Life's one law for whatsoever lives,
Whereby of each Earth gains, to each Earth gives,
What helps in turn, the End-all, and the Be-all :
One Animal : one Human : one Ideal :
Three circles of one sphere. Of these, the least
And lowest, is the kingdom of the beast,
Which man commands : who holds the middle place
Between Earth's lowest, and her highest, race.
But that which is the loftiest of the Three,
Sole region of Ideas, I take to be :
Which man, in truth, subserveth and obeyeth,
As him the brute beneath him. Whoso sayeth
A man's ideas to a man belong,
Knoweth not what he saith, or argueth wrong.
Far rather, I imagine, doth the Man
Belong to the Idea. For neither can
The Man command the Idea, nor deny
Submission to its mandate. Can he fly
From its pursuing ? or its path dictate ?
Or summons, or dismiss, or bid it wait,
Or hasten—here advance, and there stand still—
Now active be, now passive—at his will ?
And, if it live not servile to his whim,
Say, can he slay it ? Doth it not slay *him*,
Inexorably, with no mercy shown,
As he would slay a beast that is his own,

If his death, rather than his life, promote
That end whereto the Idea doth devote
The Man it uses? All as well my mule,
Whose footsteps I by staff and bridle rule,
Might think he rules me,—goeth by the road
His choice, not mine, selects, nor own the goad,
As that, for my part, I should boast to be
The lord of that ideal lord of me
Whose force I follow, and whose burthen bear,
Not as I will, but as I must, where'er
He goads me. And, if this brute mule of mine
Should lord it o'er his fellow mules,—opine
Himself the sage whose way is Wisdom's track,
Because he bears *my* wisdom on his back,
Were not his folly all the worse? 'What then,'
One asketh, 'arguest thou, apart from men,
Ideas can exist? doth not man's mind
Create the Ideal?' Nay, friend, for I find
Ideas make men, not men ideas. They
The dwellers of the ideal world, I say,
Are independent of mankind so much
As man is of the brutes. No more. For such
As is mankind's requirement of a race
Beneath it, born to serve it,—in like case
Is man. . . . Oh not by any means the lord,
But sturdy servitor, of that dim horde
Of dwellers on his brain; which, truly, need
And freely use,—to bear them, or to feed,—

For pasture, or for burthen, as may be—
Man, for their sakes created. Natheless he
Doth commonly consider and declare
That he is Something Great, because aware
Of Something Great within him. In like way
I dream'd the dial to the beam did say
'Lo, I am Time!' A little wind was waked,
Across the sun a little cloudlet shaked,
And the vain index of the heedless hour
Relapsed to nothingness. In many a flower
The moth and grub their dubious egglets hide.
Can the flower choose, or doth the flower decide
What to the summons of the sun shall rise
From her chance treasures to amaze men's eyes?
This launches, sapphrine-mantled, mail'd with gold,
Some warlike wyvern beautiful and bold,
Fit for the Persic fay that rides to woo
His shy queen, gaily, in her globe of dew:
That sends forth, barely fit to browze on burrs,
A monster hateful as the imp that spurs
His sooty flank, and hums a hell-born hymn,
Forth venturing darkly when the air is dim.
I can but laugh, not seldom, in my sleeve,
When I look round the world, and there perceive
How men have builded monuments of brass
To others on whose brains the whim it was
Of some Idea, on its sightless way
About the world, to settle, seize, and prey.

Why should the beasts, man scorns, not also raise,
After their fashion, some such baaing praise
About the sure-foot horse man drives, the ox
He ploughs with, or the fatlings of the flocks
Man kills for his best banquet? Now, I deem
That in the purpose of the One Supreme
Man is not, as he holds himself to be,
The highest necessity on Earth. But he,
Born for the service of Ideas alone,
Is for their sake, as they are for their own.
Notice, which most concerns, most occupies,
That Providence whereby man lives and dies:
Men or Ideas? An Idea hath need
Of growth,—full scope to satisfy its greed
Of power, and multiply, and propagate.
To meet which, man is there i' the mass. Now wait.
What happens? mark the issue. Men must perish
Wholesale, it may be, or piecemeal, to cherish,
Enrich, and ratify, the otherwise
Starved and pent life this one Idea tries
To nourish at men's cost; itself or these
Succumbing. Which doth the World's Ruler please
To rescue or confirm? Why, horde on horde
Nature, to serve her supernatural lord,
Of her selectest human children gives.
Little accounts she their mere deaths or lives!
'Tis but a race to ravage, but a realm
To wash away in blood, expunge, o'erwhelm.

Doth Nature shrink from,—Providence impeach,—
The sacrifice required? Men's bodies bleach
On bloody battle-fields uncounted. Men
Born to be used thus: ended there and then,
Their use being over. Dead and done with, they!
Yet not in vain, do after-comers say,
Lived they or died they, since their lives and deaths
(Else vainly born and buried in vain breaths)
Have served to manifest, make eminent
The Idea for which they lived and died, content.
But to themselves, who doubts these men's lives seem'd
Of all-surpassing value? Each was deem'd
By the dead owner of it something worth
The special cherishing of Mother Earth.
And if to save and foster man's life were
Earth's, or Earth's Arch Disposer's chiefest care
We must, for those men's sakes (whose life, pour'd forth
Like water, seems mere waste of what was worth
Such frustrate forethrift, care so baulk'd of gain,
In the fine fashioning of nerve and brain)
Attribute failure vast, or drear neglect,
To Earth's great Justicer and Architect.
But He,—that wrecks man's life i' the sharp ordeal
Which rescues life's pure essence from the unreal,
The false, the fleeting—heeds not how it fare
With the mere Human, born for death: Whose care
Is for the Ideal that doth never die.
The human swarm swims, in its season, by:

Races on races rise and roll away :
The generations flourish and decay.
What laughing Phantom leads, and mocks, the dance
Of these blind mummers thro' the Masque of Chance ?
Lives on the life that from their lips it drains,
More glorious waxes as their glory wanes,
Brightens its deathless eyes in that fine air
Whose ardent essence man's prolong'd despair
Feeds with the fires that waste it, and doth dwell
On dead men's graves, deathless, impalpable,
Made of immortal element, the pure
Result of man—man's life that doth endure
Above the dust man drops in ? What survives
Save this, the ceaseless dying of men's lives ?
Egypt and all her casts—bold Babylon,
Beautiful Hellas—Rome's Republic—gone !
What rests, on earth, the lone result of these ?
The airy, but immutable, images
Of their Ideals, in the life that lies,
To light our own, above us. Starrier eyes
Than ours are on us. Egypt's Thought, the Grace
Of Hellas,—now no more to render place
To Rome's strong Will,—the stout town-stealer. . . There
Behold man's bright pall-bearers—they that bear
On their calm brows, for costliest coronal,
The symbols of the summ'd-up ages all.
Much musing on these things, I doubt not, then,
Ideas are of more account than Men

In that grand purpose which to further here
Each of Earth's tribes was, in its several sphere,
Created."

(*He says.*)

Here the text, whereto I turn
Again, grows dubious—dark. Let him discern,
That can, its meaning!

LIX.

(*Reads.*)

"Thus Ideas grew
With human growth. Thus heavenly heralds blew
The trumpet of the triumph of the Earth.
For Fire, at first, with Matter mixt, gave birth
To breathing Life in beauteous flesh and blood.
Wherefrom anon (by its blind beauty woo'd
With clay to keep celestial company)
The Angelic Essence wrought, and raised on high,
Man, Earth's immediate monarch. Thence, thro' man,
Soon as the Earth-Spirit to commune began
With his unearthly kindred (lest forlorn
Of Heavenly love should be Earth's life) was born
The race of Earth's Ideal denizens,
Monarchs of men, whose life is more than men's.
Then, last of all, thro' these,—as first of all,
Thro' Man, was Matter in the Animal
Made 'ware of Spirit,—did man's self (the abode
Of Spirit) wax in the Spirit aware of God.

LX.

"And man, scarce started on his glorious race,
Seem'd nigh to touch the goal, when . . . What strange face
Of deathful beauty, with disastrous eyes,
—The wanton nurse of woeful destinies,
Rose on the road before him, unforetold,
To flatter to his fall him overbold
In passion,—him by fairest form beguiled
To foulest worship? What portentous child,
From the accurst incongruous union bred
Of what Ideal to what Bestial wed,
Arrests man's course yet? For behold it there
In the world's midst, arisen at unaware,
With its brute body and its brow divine,—
Man's curse,—the Everfatal Feminine!
The beautiful abominable one,
The watcher on the threshold, in the sun,
The lion-woman with the 'luring eye,
The inhuman riddle of humanity,
The weakness that is more than strength, the beast
That hath the brows of Power, and the breast
Of Beauty, and the body of Disgrace,
The Eternal Discord, with the dubious face!

LXI.

"Not causeless came the Curse of Sense. For when
The ideal world was felt i' the world of men,
From its strong action this re-action rose:

(As first, most fruitful, offspring of the throes
Of Spirit in Matter made parturient)
The consciousness of Beauty. Ill content
With merely being, man aspired to make
Man's being beautiful; and, for the sake
Of beauty, with unbeauteous circumstsnce
Contended. But, incompetent to 'advance
Except by sensuous aids, he halted there
Where his five guides, the Senses, cried 'We fare
No further.' There, soon satisfied to rest
With these, he built him temples, altars drest,
And statues shaped, and incense burn'd . . . and lo,
From out the incense fumes, with eyes aglow
To catch him, rose that Curse! Whereat . . ."

(*He says.*)

LXII.

O friends,
Suddenly, sadly, here the writing ends.
—Or rather, not the writing, as first writ
By him, whoe'er he was, that fashion'd it
Of old,—but all, alas! that time and fate
Have spared of this torn scroll; at what sad date
Thus mutilated, I divine not. Long
Hath been my labour to repair the wrong
By some rash hand, to me unknown, done here.
And all in vain! tho' many a weary year
My wandering search hath been most diligent.
Byzantium, Athens, Rome—where'er I went—

Thebes, and the ruin'd cities in the sand,
And wheresoe'er report from land to land
Denoted any learnèd Greek or Jew,
Studious to store all crumbs of knowledge, who
Might haply help me . . . nowhere have I found
The missing text. So that on broken ground
I seem to stand, as one that, with full heart
And lightly-bounding step, erewhile 'gan start
Bold on his journey to some far off spot
Reach'd only by untrodden ways—some grot
Hewn high up in a mountain land—the occult
Abode of that rare sage, whom to consult
On things of weight the man sets forth in scorn
Of peril by the way; and finds, tho' torn
To bleeding, hand and foot, by stone and briar,
The secret clue; and, taking heart, yet higher
And higher, clambers on 'twixt flint and stub,
Escapes the wild beast's paw, the robber's club,
(For bandit hordes infest the rocky height,
And from the thickets wild beasts roam by night)
But night and day he, chaunting hymns, fares on,
Surer and surer of the road. Anon,
Some dawn, at sunrise, hath he reach'd the peak
Where dwelt the sage he fared so far to seek,
And lo! the hermit strangled at the door
Of his own cave. That man shall never more
Have his doubts answer'd. No result remains,
But pure conjecture, after all my pains.

Much hath been saved, tho' much is lost: and more
Even than enough to make me much deplore
That so much saved, because of so much lost,
Should leave so unrequited care that cost
Such time and toil to save it. Question vain!
Shall Zefyr, help'd of Zafyr, yet regain
His native element original?
How shall it fare with man? What end of all
That Spirit's incarnation? Tell me you,
Whom well I deem this city's wisest two,
What think you is the import of the words
Where my conjecture halts?

ZOZOMEN.

What's saved affords
No indication of what's lost. Divine
Who may what means that "Fatal Feminine,"
I cannot. And methinks no such strange phrase
Was needed to imply, what none gainsays,
That woman, ever since the world began,
Hath been a beauteous mischief unto man.

BEN ENOCH.

No. I dismiss that meaning.

EUPHORBOS.

And elect
What other?

BEN ENOCH.

One, which doth, indeed, deject
And sorrow me most sorely. For I see
That man, being twofold, body and soul, must be
Against himself divided ever more;
Never at unison with life; so sore
The strife is 'twixt the body and soul. In just
So much as, discontented with mere dust
—Which is its native natural element,
The body, prompted by the spirit pent
Within it (which—a prisoner—doth conspire
Against its hapless gaoler), may desire
To pacify the querulous spirit, and do
Its mandates, run its errands to and fro,
In search of joys not for the body meant,
The soon-tired body's certain discontent
Dismays the spirit. And man fails that way.
Whilst, in so much as, willing to obey
The bidding of the body, heard in turn,
And humour thus the helpmate it would spurn
But cannot, the compliant spirit spares,
To deck the burthen its associate bears,
Some casual grace, some flying flavour lends
To spice the joys whereon the body spends
Its fleshly appetite,—the spirit's soon
Enkindled scorn of its own wasted boon,
And prompt disgust of what it deign'd to do,
Dismays the body. Man fails this way, too.

But, say the spirit triumphs. And what then?
Death. For it kills the body. Or, again,
Suppose the body triumphs? Again, death.
It kills the spirit. Whilst, with hinder'd breath,
The two conspire each other's failure, life
Indures, indeed: but how indures? At strife.
But in this scroll a hope, methinks,—nay, more,
A promise, seem'd vouchsafed. What I deplore
Is that, enough remaining of the scroll
To testify that, could we read the whole,
Fulfilment of that promise would be shewn,
The missing end, which cannot now be known,
Leaves, by extinguisht founts, desire awaked
To fiercer thirst, with all that thirst unslaked.
So bright the opening promise! But just here,
Here where both text and comment disappear
In a great gap of doubt,...man's prosperous march
Seems stopp'd by Sense, just where thro' Time's near arch
First gleams the Spirit's glorious goal. As when
That Carthaginian host, with Rome in ken,
At Capua caught, forewent the long-wisht end
Deserved by toil thus far endured, to spend
On pleasure premature, upon its way,
Forces first arm'd to seize a nobler prey.
The conquer'd, thus, the conquerors captive take.
Thus would-be Cæsars turn, with worlds at stake,
By captive Cleopatras captured fast,
Let worlds escape them, and are lost at last:

Thus, the Ideal Beauty, by the sense
Itself hath kindled into vehemence
O'ertaken, is in sensuous fetters fasten'd :
Thus man's defeat his first success hath hasten'd :
Thus, the old question vain returns again ;
And, just where all seem'd gain'd, all's lost for men.
Which things perplex me.

EUPHORBUS.

Hush ! we are o'erheard.
Who is yon stranger ?

ZOZOMEN.

Not a leaflet stirr'd
Among the myrtles : on the path no stone
Cried out : and thro' the gates not any one
Can pass unchallenged. How, then, came he here ?

BEN ENOCH.

A man of most strange aspect.

EUPHORBOS.

He draws near.

ZOZOMEN.

Mark him !

THE STRANGER (*approaching*).

Peace be unto you, brethren. Much
I marvel, O Ben Enoch, that on such
A mind as thine, inquisitive of all
Light's rays, such mere interposition small
Should cast such shadow. A man's hand, no doubt,
Is not so small but what it can shut out
God's sun, if only thro' a single hole
The sunlight enters. But to thee the whole
O' the world is open'd. Seest thou not, altho'
The conquer'd do the conquerors conquer, slow
But sure from out such conquest comes a new
And nobler triumph born of both? Thou, Jew,
Were not the Roman master (as he is)
Of all thy race, how should thine master his
By knowledge, veil'd from Lars and Lucumon,
Yet view'd by Israel ere the Roman won
A rood of barren earth for that first plough
Beneath whose yoke the world's self labours now?
The Ideal thus, tho' by the Sensuous held
In bondage for a while, doth work and weld
All to itself, till form be fill'd with soul.
And, if indeed the story of thy scroll
Holds ancient warrant, as thou dost believe,
Deem'st thou the toil of Matter could so grieve
A Spirit's nature as therefrom to get
Most pitiful participation, yet
The toil of Spirit—stronger far than this,

And nobler much—receive of Him, that is
Father of Spirits, no assistance meet,
Even from the fugitive semblance of defeat
Securing future triumph ?...triumph miss'd
By man in Adam, won for man in Christ !
Which, tho', indeed, for all achieved by one,
Must yet again by each be made his own,
In his own fashion, after his own kind,
Ere all possess the gain of each combined.
Meanwhile, one man's life marks where life may reach.
One ripple only touching on the beach,
Thou say'st "The whole sea spreads thus far." But one
Of the chain's many links holds fast the stone
The mason's engine lifts : yet say'st thou not
"The whole chain's motion moves the stone ?" I wot
Thou hast much to learn, Ben Enoch.

(*He passes.*)

EUPHORBOS (*after a pause*).

Come and gone
Incredibly ! and with announcement none,
More than the sudden shadow on the grass
Of a cloud passing.

ZOZOMEN.

Thou didst let him pass
Too lightly.

BEN ENOCH.

There was that upon my mind,
Whilst yet his eye was on me, I could find
No answer to his speech.

ZOZOMEN.

Nor I.

EUPHORBOS.

Didst scan
His face?

BEN ENOCH

I think it was no living man.
I think it was Elias.

EUPHORBOS.

Could he speak
Our language, Jew? For this man's speech was Greek.

ZOZOMEN.

What if it were—once more vouchsafed to us,—
He of Tyana, that taught Ephesus
Things inconceivable...since of his death
No man is certain?

EUPHORBOS.

Such-like rumour saith
The same of Heavenly John, whom Christus told
How God to him had granted to behold,

Whilst yet on Earth, the coming of the Day
Of Renovation. For that man, some say,
Is yet among us : and at sundry times,
Of sundry folk, in many different climes,
Hath certainly been seen. And whensoe'er
The man hath shown himself at unaware,
Great things have happen'd. Him I think it was
That hath been with us, and is gone. Because
Did he not name the man, or god, whom we
From some of the new Jews have heard to be
The founder of their sect,—bowing his head
The while he spake? Moreover it doth spread,
This sect, already, even amongst ourselves
Who walk with Plato : even on mine own shelves
I keep a book—'tis barbarous Greek, indeed,—
About that selfsame Christus and his creed,
Ascribed to this same John . . .

BEN ENOCH *and* ZOZOMEN.

We'll follow him.

Went he this way?

EUPHORBOS.

No. Where the air is dim
Deep in yon tamarisk thicket.

BEN ENOCH.

Would I knew
What he would have us think he knows!

ZOZOMEN.

I too.

EUPHORBOS.

Hark!

A DISTANT VOICE.

Kai to pneuma kai hê nymphê . . .

EUPHORBOS.

There!

THE VOICE.

Legousin Elthe . . .

ZOZOMEN.

Yonder! where the air
Is dim . . .

THE VOICE.

Kai ho akouon eipato
Elthe!

EUPHORBOS.

That voice again! in tones, as tho'
The man's hand beckon'd while his mystic hymn
To us he chaunts.

BEN ENOCH.

Shall we not follow him?

OMNES.

Most certainly.

ZOZOMEN.

But if it be, indeed,
Only a phantom which the air doth breed
Not seldom, near the setting of the sun,
Out of the womb of Eve—an eidolon
That hath no substance save what it hath power
To suck from mortal sense at this dim hour
Which ushers in the night, . . . all search were vain.

EUPHORBOS.

And I am bidden . . .

THE VOICE.

Elthe!

BEN ENOCH.

Hark, again!

EUPHORBOS.

I cannot. Follow, you. I cannot. I
Am bidden to the great festivity
Which What's-his-name,—the new-made Consul's choice,—
This very night . . .

THE VOICE.

Elthe!

BEN ENOCH.

Again that voice !

ZOZOMEN.

By Bacchus ! I too must away. To night
Myself am one of those his friends invite
To hear our bran-new poet, Proteus, read
His bran-new Epic . . .

BEN ENOCH.

And for me, indeed,
Philemon, the Librarian, waits by this,
To overlook that learnèd work of his
Which crowns the labours of Ben Shittag, who
Reform'd erewhile the Kabala,—a Jew
Whom the Greek justly honours. Yet 'tis sad.
I would have follow'd.

EUPHORBOS.

I too, if I had
The time . . .

ZOZOMEN.

And I.

BEN ENOCH.

But weightier matters . . .

EUPHORBOS.

Then
Farewell, Ben Enoch. Farewell, Zozomen.

ZOZOMEN.

Farewell, Euphorbos. Farewell worthy Jew.

BEN ENOCH.

And, gentle friends, a like farewell to you.

(*They disperse.*)

TIME (*passing in the silence*).

Go, fools! It tasks a century's search to espy
What oft a moment drops in passing by.

END OF BOOK IV.

BOOK V.

LEGENDS AND ROMANCES.

"We journey in the path of Parivaha."—*Sakoontalá.*

MOHAMMED.*

MOHAMMED, THE DIVINE, ere yet his name
Blazed in the front of everlasting fame,
Withdrew into the Desert, and abode
Hard by Mount Hara, long alone with God.

But from the solitude his soul swept forth
And view'd the world,—east, west, and south, and north:
Weakness without, and wickedness within:
And how the people murmur'd, as in Zin,
Yet lack'd the heavenly food; how, on each side,
The Roman, and the Persian, in their pride,
Were perishing from empire; how the Jew
Defamed Jehovah; how the Christian crew,
Wrangling around a desecrated Christ,
Blacken'd the Light of God with smoke and mist

* It is needless to mention that this has no foundation whatever in fact. It is told by Vanini in one of his Dialogues, "De admirandis Naturæ," &c., and there used by him, as here by me, without scruple, to serve a purpose by way of illustration. As regards Mohammed himself, it is a gross calumny. But, as regards every form of Religious Authority founded on *fear* of the Supernatural, whereof Mohammed is here the dramatic representative, it is no calumny, but, rather, the feeble illustration of a formidable fact.

Of idol-incense; how, in midst of this,
Confusion crumbling down to the abyss,
A void was, day by day, and hour by hour,
Forming fit verge and scope for some new Power.

And he perceived that every Power is good
First,—since it comes from God, be it understood:
But, after resting many years on earth,
Power dwindles from the primal strength of birth,
Grows weak, then gets confused, and, last, goes mad.
So that it is the weakness that is bad,
And not the potency, of creeds, and schools,
And kings, and whatsoever reigns or rules.
For, howsoe'er the ruler wield the rod,
His right to rule is by the grace of God,
Not the disgrace of man, which they that cause
By wrongful rule, are rebels to God's laws.

And, whilst he thought on this, and thought beside
How nothing now was wanting to provide
That novel Power which should regenerate
Mankind, renew belief, and re-create
Creation, but one bold man's active will,
Mohammed's secret thoughts were troubled, till
They made a darkness on his countenance.

Then Amru timidly raised up his glance
Upon the Prophet's face. Amru, his friend,

Who, thro' those solitudes to watch and tend
Upon him, stole from Mecca, when the light
Was fading out, and, footing the deep night,
At daybreak found him in the wilderness;
And, all day long, beneath an intense stress
Of silence, breathing low, was fain to lie,
Just tolerated by the kingly eye
Of his great friend, endeavouring to become
Like a mere piece of the rock's self,—so dumb
And gray, and motionless. Amru, at last
Look'd up; and saw Mohammed's face o'ercast,
And murmur'd

"O Mohammed, art thou sad?"

But still the Prophet seem'd as tho' he had
Nor seen, nor heard, him.

Amru then arose,
And crept a little nearer, and sat close
Against the skirting of his robe, and said
"Mohammed, peace be with thee!"

Still, his head
Mohammed lifted not, nor answer'd aught.
Then Amru said again

"What is thy thought,
Mohammed?"

And Mohammed answer'd

"Friend,
A sad thought; which I think you will not mend.
For first, I thought upon the mighty world
Which lies beyond this wilderness, unfurl'd
Like a great chart, to read in. And I saw
How in all places the old power and law
Are falling off. Again, I thought upon
My Arabs in the ages coming on;
The weakness, and the wickedness, of all
The ancient races; our own strength; God's call;
And all we might be, if we heard but that.
But if, I thought, I tell this people what
God, who speaks to me in the solitude,
Hath bid me tell them, the loud rabble rude
Will mock me, crying 'Who made thee to be
A teacher of us?' If I answer 'He
Whose name is Very God, and God Alone,
He, and none other,' surely they will stone
Or tear me. For tho' I, to prove the Lord
Hath sent me to them, should proclaim His word,
They will not heed it. Men were never wise
(And never will be yet!) to recognize
God, when He speaks by Law and Order: since
In these there's nothing startling to convince
The jaded sense of those that day by day
See law and order working every way
Around them,—yet in vain! And still God speaks

Only by law and order; never breaks
The old law even to fulfil the new.
But men are ever eager, when they view
Some seeming strange disorder, to exclaim
'A god! a god!' They think they hear God's name
In thunder and in earthquake, but are deaf
To the low lispings of the fallen leaf,
And the soft hours. As tho' it were God's way
To make man's mere bewilderment obey
Some one of His immutably-fix'd laws
By breaking of another,—for no cause
Better than set agaping apes and fools—
Ruling His world by riving his own rules!
A worthy way! Sure am I, if anon
Some mighty-mouthèd prodigy...yon stone,
Say,—dumb as Pharaoh in his pyramid,
Should suddenly find tongue, and, speaking, bid
The hearers worship me,—or where, below
There, like a mangled serpent trailing slow,
The camel-path twists in and out the rocks,
Yon sandy fissure, which the sly bitch-fox
Would choose well for her yellow nursery,
Gave forth a voice, to every passer by
Proclaiming me the Appointed One,...they all
Would straightway grovel at my feet, and call
Heaven to attest how they believed,—each thief
And liar vigorous in his vow'd belief!
But 'twill not be."

After a little pause,
"Why not?" said Amru.

. "Why not, friend? Because,"
Mohammed answer'd, "Allah will not bring
His heaven and earth together, just to wring
Credence from creatures incapacious, slight,
And void, as these. Nor, tho' his own hand write
The wondrous warrant to this life of mine,
Dare I so much as publish the divine
Commission. Still the cautious earth and skies
Keep close the secret. Let who will be wise.
God shuts me in the hollow of His hand;
Tho' in my heart I hear His stern command
'Go forth, and preach.'"
With petulant foot he spurn'd
The sandy pebbles from him.
Amru turn'd
His forehead, bright with sudden bravery, up:
And all his face flow'd over, as a cup
Wherein wine mantles, with a noble thought.

"And God doth well!" he answer'd, "tho' by nought,
Mohammed, proved a mightier miracle
(And, sure, God's gracious gift!) than is the spell
Thou hast to sway to thine my inmost heart,
Do I undoubtingly believe thou art
The Man Appointed,—yet, indeed, for such

As these, of whom thou speakest, needing much
More gross and vulgar warrant for belief,
—Incompetent to see in thee the Chief
Of Prophets, by the dominant pale brow
And eyes from which the sworded seraphs bow
Their foreheads abasht,—O wherefore need God send
A miracle more mighty than—a Friend,
Who loves" . . .

"A friend!"

—"I say, what miracle
Diviner than the heart that loveth well?"

"So well?" Mohammed faulter'd.

"Even so,"
Said Amru, drooping faint his head, as tho'
The effort to uplift that heavy weight
Of his devoted passion proved too great,
And dragg'd him down to earth.
Mohammed sat
Gasping against the silence: staring at
The man before him, with a smould'ring eye:
Whilst his hand shut and open'd silently,
As tho' the Fiend's black forelock, slipping thro'
His feverish clutch, just foil'd him: and the hue
Waned into whiteness on his swarthy cheek.

Then Amru, when Mohammed would not speak,
Lifted his looks, and gazed, as tho' in doubt
Of what strange thing the silence was about.
And Amru said

"Mohammed, let thy slave
Find favour in thy sight!—albeit, I have
No wit in counsel.* Get thee privily
Again to Mecca. Leave this night to me.
To-morrow, stand up in the marketplace
And plead against the people, face to face,
And call them hither; prophesying they
By sign and miracle along the way
Shall know The Man Appointed. I, meanwhile,
Will creep into yon crevice . . . Ha! dost smile,
Mohammed? Dost approve the thing I mean?
—Will creep into yon crevice, and, unseen,
Await the multitude,—which must come by,
Thou guiding. Unto whom a voice shall cry
'*This is Mohammed! I, the Lord of Heaven,*
Make known to all this people, I have given
To him to preach My Law,—that he may be
My Prophet, to all nations under Me.'
——Smile! smile again, Mohammed! . . . Only smile
Less terribly upon me! . . . Of the vile
The vilest,—yet thy servant, Aweful One!
Less terribly, Mohammed! . .

"Then, anon
When all the place is silent—the crowd far—

Far out of sight—and nothing but yon star
To witness,—I will steal out of the cave." . . .

"Hah!" . . .

"—O Mohammed, am I not thy slave?
Look not so fiercely on me! . . . And far off
Follow the silly people. Who will scoff?
Who will misdoubt thee then? . . . Mohammed, speak!"

Mohammed spake not.

All the Prophet's cheek
Was wan with whirling thoughts that o'er it cast
Their troubled shades, and left it calm at last,
As battle fields,—when battles have been won,
Or lost, and dawn breaks slowly.

"Be it, my son,
As thou hast spoken. This is God's command."
He wearily sigh'd, and laid a heavy hand
On Amru's shoulder. "I to Mecca go
This night. At dawn, as thou hast said, so do."

And all night long, over the silent sand,
Under the silent stars, across the land
Mohammed fled: as tho' he heard the feet

Of Iblis following, and a voice repeat
Close at his ear, monotonous and slow,

"Thou wouldst have had this man trust thee. But now, Mohammed, thou thyself must trust to him."

And the voice ceased not; nor the feet; till, dim
At first, then flaring in a stormy sky,
The drear dawn lighten'd o'er him angrily.

That day he stood up in the market-place,
And pleaded with the people face to face;
Pouring from urns of solitary thought
A piercing eloquence upon them, brought,
Word after word, by wondrous Spirits from far,
Shrill with the music of the morning star,
Weighty with thunder. Some averr'd they saw
The light that lighted Moses, when the Law
On Sinai from God's finger he received,
Enhalo all his brow. The noon achieved
The dawn's desire. They followed him by flocks
Far thro' the Desert to the rifted rocks.
And, ever as they journey'd, in their van
A thunder cloud, that, since the day began,
Had labour'd to demolish half the sky,
Travell'd to reach Mount Hara, and there die.
And still the people follow'd: and, beside
The mountain halting, heard a voice which cried

(Out of a rocky fissure, the ground story
Of some wild coney's dismal dormitory)

"*This is Mohammed! I, the Lord of Heaven,*
Proclaim to all this people, I have given
To him to preach My Law, that he may be
My Prophet, to all nations under Me."

And, as the voice ceased, suddenly a streak
Of fork'd fire flicker'd from a riven creek
In the spent cloud, which, splitting overhead
Bellow'd.
And all the people cried, and said
"The Voice of God!"
And then did each man fall
Flat at the Prophet's feet, and, grovelling, call
On Heaven's Appointed.
"Speak, Mohammed! speak!"

Mohammed spake not.

All the Prophet's cheek
Was white with pain, as warring angels pass'd
Across his trampled soul—left bare at last
As battle fields,—when battles have been won,
Or lost, and dawn breaks slowly.

Blocks of stone,
Tumbled by ages in the rifted sand,
Burn'd white about the lion-colour'd land,
And, beaten by a blinding sunlight, made
Blots, in a level glare, of sprinkled shade.
Mohammed stretch'd his hand. Not Moses' rod
Won easier reverence.

"Ay! the Voice of God
Hath spoken, not to be misunderstood,
This day unto us. Wherefore, it seems good
To build, O friends, an altar to The Lord
Here on the spot from whence the wondrous Word
Hath issued. And see! Nature, warn'd before
Of this forecast event, hath furnish'd store
Of stone to build with. Never from this day
Be it averr'd that any beast of prey
Or reptile base hath been allow'd to dwell
Where God first housed His Holy Oracle!
Cram every crevice of this mountain flaw:
Leave not a loophole for the leopard's paw,
A cranny that a mouse might wriggle thro'!
If anything unclean hath crept into
This Mouth of Earth where Heaven's high Voice abode
Erewhile, O friends,—worm, adder, viper, toad,
There let it perish 'neath a costlier tomb
Than ever reptile own'd! Seal up the womb
Of this dread prodigy. Hark! from yon cloud

Above us, Spirits of the thunder, bow'd
To watch, grow wild, impatient to be gone.
Begin the work. Pile strong with ponderous stone
The altar. Bear ye each his burthen . . . Nay,
None but myself the first firm stone shall lay
Unto this sacred fabric!" . . .

Then himself,
Fiercely dislodging from its sandy shelf
A mighty mountain fragment, roll'd, with might
And main, the rock-surrender'd offering right
Against the cave. And turn'd himself about
And hid his face. In prayer, as who shall doubt?

And, when the people heard this, they were glad
Exceedingly: not only to have had
No heavier task enjoin'd them, but because
If any man profane had dared to pause
And doubt till then, he, certes, had no choice
But to believe henceforth. For, if the *voice*
Were nothing more than human, the *command*
Was something less. Could mere Ambition stand
Thus calmly contemplating, stone by stone,
The immurement of some creature of its own?
And so they hearten'd to the work, until
The rocky altar rose against the hill;
And then Mohammed blest it.

And that day,
Upon that altar, Providence, they say,
Founded a new Religion. Which, thus reared
In the lone Desert, spread, and soon ensphered
The quadripartite globe. But, from that day,
Mohammed went no more alone to pray
On Hara, as his wont had been before.

For him, the sweet of solitude was o'er.

THE ROSES OF SAADI.

I.

MOSES AND THE DERVISH.

God, that heaven's seven climates hath spread forth,
To every creature, even as is the worth,
The lot apportions, and the use of things.
If to the creeping cat were given wings,
No sparrow's egg would ever be a bird.

Moses the Prophet, who with God conferr'd,
Beheld a Dervish, that, for dire distress
And lack of clothes to hide his nakedness,
Buried his body in the desert sand.
This Dervish cried
"O Moses, whom the Hand
Of the Most High God favours! make thy prayer
That He may grant me food and clothes to wear
Who knows the misery of me, and the need."

Then Moses pray'd to God, that He would feed
And clothe that Dervish.

Nine days after this,
Returning from Mount Sinai in bliss,
Having beheld God's face, the Prophet met
The Dervish in the hands of Justice, set
Between two officers ; and, all about,
The rabble follow'd him with hoot, and shout,
And jeer.
The Prophet ask'd of those that cried
"What hath befallen this man ?"

And they replied
"He hath drunk wine, and, having slain a man,
Is going to the death."

Moses began
To praise the Maker of the Universe,
Seeing that his prayer, tho' granted, proved perverse,
Since God to every living soul sets forth
The circumstance according to the worth.

II.

THE BOY AND THE RING.

FAIR chance, held fast, is merit. A certain king
Of Persia had a jewel in a ring.
He set it on the dome of Azud high;
And, when they saw it flashing in the sky,
Made proclamation to his royal troop,
That whoso sent an arrow thro' the hoop
That held the gem, should have the ring to wear.

It chanced there were four hundred archers near,
Of the king's company, about the king.

Each took his aim, and shot, and miss'd the ring.

A boy, at play upon the terraced roof
Of a near building, bent his bow aloof
At random, and behold! the morning breeze
His little arrow caught, and bore with ease
Right thro' the circlet of the gem. The king,
Well-pleased, unto the boy assign'd the ring.

Then the boy burnt his arrows and his bow.

The king, astonish'd, said "Why dost thou so,
Seeing thy first shot hath had great success?"

He answer'd "Lest my second make that less."

III.

THE EYES OF MAHMUD.

SULTÀN MAHMÙD, son of Sabaktogin,
Swept with his sceptre the hot sands of Zin,
Spread forth his mantle over Palestine,
And made the carpet of his glory shine
From Cufah to Cashmere; and, in his pride
Said "All these lands are mine."

At last he died.

Then his sons laid him with exceeding state
In a deep tomb. Upon the granite gate
Outside they graved in gold his titles all,
And all the names of kingdoms in his thrall,
And all his glory. And beside his head
They placed a bag of rice, a loaf of bread,
And water in a pitcher. This they did
In order that, if God should haply bid
His servant Death to let this sultan go
Because of his surpassing greatness, so

He might not come back hungry. But he lay
In his high marble coffin night and day
Motionless, without majesty or will.

Darkness sat down beside him, and was still.

Afterwards, when a hundred years had roll'd,
A certain king, desiring to behold
This famous sultan, gave command to unlock
The granite gate of that sepulchral rock,
And, with a lamp, went down into the tomb,
And all his court.

Out of the nether gloom
There rose a loathsome stench intolerable.
Hard by the marble coffin, on a sill
Of mildew'd stone the earthen pitcher stood,
Untouch'd, untasted. Rats, a ravenous brood,
Had scatter'd all the rice, and gnaw'd the bread.
All that was left upon his marble bed
Of the great Sultan was a little heap
Of yellow bones, and a dry skull, with deep
Eye-sockets. But in those eye-sockets, lo!
Two living eyes were rolling to and fro,
Now left, now right, with never any rest.

Then was the king amazed, and smote his breast
And call'd on God for grace. But not the less

Those dismal eyes with dreadful restlessness
Continually in their socket-holes
Roll'd right and left, like pain'd and wicked souls.
Then said the king "Call here an Abid, wise
And righteous, to rebuke those wicked eyes
That will not rest."

And when the Abid came
The king said "O mine Abid, in the name
Of the High God that judges quick and dead,
Speak to those eyes."

The Abid, trembling, said
"Eyes of Mahmud, why is your rest denied
In death? What seek ye here?"

The eyes replied,
Still rolling in their wither'd sockets there,
"God's curse upon this darkness! Where, O where
Be my possessions? For with fierce endeavour
Ever we seek them, but can find them never."

THE APPLE OF LIFE.

FROM the river Euphrates, the river whose source is in Paradise, far
As red Egypt,—sole lord of the land and the sea, 'twixt the eremite star
Of the orient desert's lone dawn, and the porch of the chambers of rest
Where the great sea is girded with fire, and Orion returns in the West,
And the ships come and go in grand silence,—King Solomon reign'd. And behold,
In that time there was everywhere silver as common as stones be, and gold
That for plenty was 'counted as silver, and cedar as sycamore trees
That are found in the vale, for abundance. For GOD to the King gave all these,
With glory exceeding; moreover all kings of the earth to him came,
Because of his wisdom, to hear him. So great was King Solomon's fame.

And for all this the King's soul was sad. And his heart said within him, "Alas,

"For man dies! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass.

And that which remaineth behind him, he seeth it not any more:

For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went before?

I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and gold,

And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not withhold:

And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away?

I have searchèd out wisdom and knowledge: and what do they profit me, they?

As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gather'd is scatter'd again.

As the breath of the beasts, even so is the breath of the children of men:

And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his own."

This he thought, as he sat in his garden, and watch'd the great sun going down

In the glory thereof; and the earth and the sky, in that glory, became

Clothed clear with the gladness of colour, and bathed in the
beauty of flame.
And "Behold," said the King, "in a moment the glory shall
vanish!" Even then,
While he spake, he was 'ware of a man drawing near him, who
seem'd to his ken
(By the hair in its blackness like flax that is burn'd in the
hemp-dresser's shed,
And the brow's smoky hue, and the smouldering eyeball
more livid than lead)
As the sons of the land that lies under the sword of the
Cherub whose wing
Wraps in wrath the shut gateways of Paradise. He, being
come to the King,
Seven times made obeisance before him. To whom, "What
art thou," the King cried,
"That thus unannounced to King Solomon comest?" The
man, spreading wide
The palm of his right hand, show'd in it an apple yet bright
from the Tree
In whose stem springs the life never-failing which Sin lost
to Adam, when he,
Tasting knowledge forbidden, found death in the fruit of
it. . . So doth the Giver
Evil gifts to the evil apportion. And "Hail! let the King
live for ever!"
Bowing down at the feet of the monarch, and laughingly,
even as one

Whose meaning, in joy or in jest, hovers hid 'twixt the word and the tone,
Said the stranger (as lightly the apple he dropp'd in the hand of the King),
"For lo ye! from 'twixt the four rivers of Eden, GOD gave me to bring
To his servant King Solomon, even to my lord that on Israel's throne
He hath 'stablisht, this fruit from the Tree in whose branch Life abideth: for none
Shall taste death, having tasted this apple."
And therewith he vanish'd.

Remain'd
In the hand of the King the life-apple: ambrosial of breath, golden-grain'd,
Rosy-bright as a star dipt in sunset. The King turn'd it o'er, and perused
The fruit, which, alluring his lip, in his hand lay untasted.

He mused,
"Life is good: but not life in itself. Life eternal, eternally young,
That were life to be lived, or desired! Well it were if a man could prolong
The manhood that moves in the muscles, the rapture that mounts in the brain
When life at the prime, in the pastime of living, led on by the train

Of the jubilant senses, exulting goes forth, brave of body and spirit,
To conquer, choose, claim, and enjoy what 'twas born to achieve or inherit.
The dance, and the festal procession! the pride in the strenuous play
Of the sinews that, eager for service, the will, tho' it wanton, obey!
When in veins lightly flowing, the fertile and bountiful impulses beat,
When the dews of the dawn of Desire on the roses of Beauty are sweet:
And the eye glows with glances that kindle, the lip breathes the warmth that inspires,
And the hand hath yet vigour to seize the good thing which the spirit desires!
O well for the foot that bounds forward! and ever the wind it awakes
Lifts no lock from the forehead yet white, not a leaf that is wither'd yet shakes
From the loose flowers wreathing young tresses! and ever the earth and the skies
Abound in rich ardours, rejoicings, and raptures of endless surprise!
Life is sweet to the young that yet know not what life is. But life, after Youth,
The gay liar, leaves hold of the bauble, and Age, with his terrible truth,

Picks it up, and perceives it is broken, and knows it unfit to engage
The care it yet craves. . . . Life eternal, eternally wedded to Age!
What gain were in that? Why should any man seek what he loathes to prolong?
The twilight that darkens the eyeball: the dull ear that's deaf to the song,
When the maidens rejoice and the bride to the bridegroom, with music, is led:
The palsy that shakes 'neath the blossoms that fall from the chill bridal bed.
When the hand saith '*I did*,' not '*I will do*,' the heart saith '*It was*,' not ''*Twill be*,'
Too late in man's life is Forever—too late comes this apple to me!"
Then the King rose. And lo, it was evening. And leaning, because he was old,
On the sceptre that, curiously sculptured in ivory garnish'd with gold,
To others a rod of dominion, to him was a staff for support,
Slow paced he the murmurous pathways where myrtles, in court up to court,
Mixt with roses in garden on garden, were ranged around fountains that fed
With cool music green odorous twilights: and so, never lifting his head

To look up from the way he walk'd wearily, he to the House
of his Pride
Reascended, and enter'd.

In cluster, high lamps, spices, odours, each side,
Burning inward and onward, from cinnamon ceilings, down
distances vast
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls thro' whose silent-
ness pass'd
King Solomon sighing ; where columns colossal stood, gather'd
in groves
As the trees of the forest in Libanus,—there where the wind,
as it moves,
Whispers "I, too, am Solomon's servant !"—huge trunks hid
in garlands of gold,
On whose tops the skill'd sculptors of Sidon had granted men's
gaze to behold
How the phœnix that sits on the cedar's lone summit 'mid
fragrance and fire,
Ever dying and living, hath loaded with splendours her funeral
pyre ;
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top ; the date from
the palm-branch depends ;
And the shaft of the blossoming aloe soars crowning the
life which it ends.
And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent
slaves, watchful-eyed,

Bow'd to earth as King Solomon pass'd them. And, passing,
King Solomon sigh'd.
And, from hall on to hall pacing feebly, the king mused . . .
"O fair Shulamite!
"Thy beauty is brighter than starlight on Hebron when
Hebron is bright,
Thy sweetness is sweeter than Carmel. The King rules the
nations; but thou,
Thou rulest the King, my Belovèd."

So murmur'd King Solomon low
To himself, as he pass'd thro' the portal of porphyry, that
dripp'd, as he pass'd,
From the myrrh-sprinkled wreaths on the locks and the
lintels; and enter'd at last,
Still sighing, the sweet cedarn chamber, contrived for repose
and delight,
Where the beautiful Shulamite slumber'd. And straightway,
to left and to right,
Bowing down as he enter'd, the Spirits in bondage to Solomon,
there
Keeping watch o'er his love, sank their swords, spread their
wings, and evanish'd in air.
The King with a kiss woke the sleeper. And, showing the
fruit in his hand,
"Behold! this was brought me erewhile by one coming," he
said, "from the land

That lies under the sword of the Cherub. 'Twas pluckt by strange hands from the Tree
Of whose fruit whoso tasteth shall die not. And therefore I bring it to thee,
My belovèd. For thou of the daughters of women art fairest. And lo,
I, the King, I that love thee, whom men of man's sons have call'd wisest, I know
That in knowledge is sorrow. Much thought is much care. In the beauty of youth,
Not the wisdom of age, is enjoyment. Nor spring, is it sweeter, in truth,
Than winter, to roses once wither'd. The garment, tho' broider'd with gold,
Fades apace where the moth frets the fibres. So I, in my glory, grow old.
And this life maketh mine (save the bliss of my soul in the beauty of thee)
No sweetness so great now that greatly unsweet 'twere to lose what to me
Life prolong'd, at its utmost, can promise. But thine, O thou spirit of bliss,
Thine is all that the living desire,—youth, beauty, love, joy in all this!
And O were it not well for the praise of the world to maintain evermore
This mould of a woman, God's masterwork, made for mankind to adore?

Wherefore keep thou the gift I resign. Live for ever, rejoicing in life!
And of women unborn yet the fairest shall still be King Solomon's wife."
So he said, and so dropp'd in her bosom the apple.

But when he was gone,
And the beautiful Shulamite, eyeing the gift of the King, sat alone
With the thoughts the King's words had awaken'd, as ever she turn'd and perused
The fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted—she mused,
"Life is good; but not life in itself. So is youth, so is beauty. Mere stuff
Are all these for Love's usance. To live, it is well; but it is not enough.
Well, too, to be fair, to be young; but what good is in beauty and youth
If the lovely and young are not surer than they that be neither, forsooth,
Young nor lovely, of being beloved? O my love, if thou lovest not me,
Shall I love my own life? Am I fair, if not fair, Azariah, to thee?"
Then she hid in her bosom the apple. And rose.

And, reversing the ring

That, inscribed with the word that works wonders, and sign'd with the seal of the King,
Hath o'er spirits and demons dominion—(for she, for a plaything, erewhile
From King Solomon's awful forefinger, had won it away with a smile)—
The beautiful Shulamite folded her veil o'er her forehead and eyes,
And, with footsteps that fleeted as silent and swift as a bird's shadow flies,
Unseen from the palace, she pass'd, and pass'd down to the city unseen,
Unseen pass'd the green garden wicket, the vineyard, the cypresses green,
And stood by the doors of the house of the Prince Azariah. And cried,
In the darkness she cried—"Azariah, awaken! ope, ope to me wide!
"Ope the door, ope the lattice! Arise! Let me in, O my love! It is I.
Thee, the bride of King Solomon, loveth. Love, tarry not. Love, shall I die
At thy doors? I am sick of desire. For my love is more comely than gold.
More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king that is old.
Behold, I have pass'd thro' the city, unseen of the watchmen. I stand

By the doors of the house of my love, till my love lead me
in by the hand."
Azariah arose. And unbolted the door to the fair Shula-
mite.
"O my queen, what dear folly is this, that hath led thee
alone, and by night,
To the house of King Solomon's servant? For lo you, the
watchmen awake.
And much for my own, O my queen, must I fear, and much
more for thy sake.
For at that which is done in the chamber the leek on the
housetop shall peep:
And the hand of a king it is heavy: the eyes of a king never
sleep:
But the bird of the air beareth news to the king, and the
stars of the sky
Are as soldiers by night on the turrets. I fear, O my queen,
lest we die."
"Fear thou not, O my love! Azariah fear nothing. For lo,
what I bring!
'Tis the fruit of the Tree that in Paradise GOD hideth under
the wing
Of the Cherub that chased away Adam. And whoso this
apple doth eat
Shall live—live for ever! And since unto me my own life is
less sweet
Than thy love, Azariah (sweet only thy love maketh life
unto me!),

Therefore eat! Live, and love, for life's sake, still, the love
that gives life unto thee!"
Then she held to his lips the life-apple, and kiss'd him.

But soon as alone,
Azariah lean'd out from his lattice, he mutter'd "'Tis well!
She is gone."
While the fruit in his hand lay untasted. "Such visits," he
mused, "may cost dear.
"In the love of the great is great danger, much trouble, and
care more than cheer."
Then he laugh'd, and stretch'd forth his strong arms. For
he heard from the streets of the city
The song of the women that sing in the doors after dark
their love ditty.
And the clink of the wine-cup, the voice of the wanton, the
tripping of feet,
And the laughter of youths running after, allured him. And
"*Life, it is sweet*
"*While it lasts,*" sang the women, "*and sweeter the good
minute, in that it goes,*
*For who, if the rose bloom'd for ever, so greatly would care for
the rose?*
Wherefore haste! pluck the time in the blossom." The prince
mused, "The counsel is well."
And the fruit to his lips he uplifted: yet paused. "Who is
he that can tell

"What his days shall bring forth? Life for ever . . . But what sort of life? Ah, the doubt!"

'Neath his cloak then he thrust back the apple. And open'd the door and pass'd out

To the house of the harlot Egyptian. And mused, as he went, "Life is good:

"But not life in itself. It is well while the wine-cup is hot in the blood,

And a man goeth whither he listeth, and doeth the thing that he will,

And liveth his life as he lusteth, and taketh in freedom his fill

Of the pleasure that pleaseth his humour, and feareth no snare by the way.

Shall I care to be loved by a queen, if my pride with my freedom I pay?

Better far is a handful in quiet than both hands, tho' fill'd to overflow

With pride, in vexation of spirit. And sweeter the roses that blow

From the wild seeds the wind, where he wanders, with heedless beneficence flings,

Than those that are guarded by dragons to brighten the gardens of kings.

Let a man take his chance, and be happy. The hart, tho' hard press'd by the hounds

When the horn of the hunter hath scatter'd the herd from the hills where it sounds,

Is more to be envied, tho' Death with his dart follow fast to destroy,
Than the tame beast that, pent in the paddock, tastes neither the danger nor joy
Of the mountain, and all its surprises. The main thing is, not to live *long*,
But to *live*. Better moments of rapture soon ended than ages of wrong.
Life's feast is best spiced by the flavour of death in it. Just the one chance
To lose it to-morrow the life that a man lives to-day doth enhance.
The may-be for me, not the must-be! Best flourish while flourish the flowers,
And fall ere the frost falls. The dead, do they rest or arise with new powers?
Either way, well for them. Mine, meanwhile, be the cup of life's fulness to-night.
And to-morrow . . . Well, time to consider" (he felt at the fruit): "What delight
Of his birthright had Esau, when hungry? To-day with its pottage is sweet.
For a man cannot feed and be full on the faith of to-morrow's baked meat.
Open! open, my dark-eyed beguiler of darkness!"

Up rose to his knock,

Light of foot, the lascivious Egyptian, and lifted the latch from the lock,
And open'd. And led in the prince to her chamber, and shook out her hair,
Dark, heavy, and humid with odours; her bosom beneath it laid bare,
And sleek sallow shoulder; and sloped back her face, as, when falls the slant South
In wet whispers of rain, flowers bend back to catch it; so she, with shut mouth
Half-unfolding for kisses; and sank, as they fell, 'twixt his knees, with a laugh,
On the floor, in a flood of deep hair flung behind her full throat; held him half
Aloof with one large languid arm, while the other up-propp'd, where she lay,
Limbs flowing in fulness and lucid in surface as waters at play,
Tho' in firmness as slippery marble. Anon she sprang loose from his clasp,
And whirl'd from the table a flagon of silver twined round by an asp
That glitter'd,—rough gold and red rubies; and pour'd him, and praised him, the wine
Wherewith she first brighten'd the moist lip that murmur'd, "Ha, fool! art thou mine?
"I am thine. This will last for an hour." Then, humming strange words of a song,

Sung by maidens in Memphis the old, when they bore the
Crown'd Image along,
Apples yellow and red from a basket with vine-leaves o'erlaid
she 'gan take,
And play'd with, peel'd, tost them, and caught them, and bit
them, for idleness' sake;
But the rinds on the floor she flung from her, and laugh'd at
the figures they made,
As her foot pusht them this way and that way together.
And, "Look, fool," she said,
"It is all sour fruit, this! But those I fling from me,—see
here by the stain!—
Shall carry the mark of my teeth in their flesh. Could they
feel but the pain,
O my soul, how these teeth should go through them! Fool,
fool, what good gift dost thou bring?
For thee have I sweeten'd with cassia my chambers." "A
gift for a king,"
Azariah laugh'd loud; and tost to her the apple. "This
comes from the Tree
"Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives for ever. I care not. I
give it to thee.
Nay, witch! 'tis worth more than the shekels of gold thou
hast charm'd from my purse.
Take it. Eat. Life is sweeter than knowledge: and Eve,
thy sly mother, fared worse,
O thou white-toothèd taster of apples!" "Thou liest, fool?"
"Taste, then, and try.

For the truth of the fruit's in the eating. 'Tis thou art the serpent, not I."
And the strong man laugh'd loud as he push'd at her lip the life-apple. She caught
And held it away from her, musing; and mutter'd . . . "Go to! It is nought.
"Fool, why dost thou laugh?" And he answer'd, "Because, witch, it tickles my brain
"Intensely to think that all we, that be Something while yet we remain,
We, the princes of people—ay, even the King's self—shall die in our day,
And thou, that art Nothing, shall sit on our graves, with our grandsons, and play."
So he said, and laugh'd louder.

But when, in the grey of the dawn, he was gone,
And the wan light wax'd large in the window, as she on her bed sat alone,
With the fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted, perusing,
Perplext, the gay gift of the Prince, the dark woman thereat fell a musing,
And she thought . . . "What is Life without Honour? And what can the life that I live
"Give to me, I shall care to continue, not caring for aught it can give?

I, despising the fools that despise me—a plaything not pleasing myself—
Whose life, for the pelf that maintains it, must sell what is paid not by pelf!
I? . . . the man call'd me Nothing. He said well. 'The great in their glory must go.'
And why should I linger, whose life leadeth nowhere?—a life which I know
To name is to shame—struck, unsexed, by the world from its list of the lives
Of the women whose womanhood, saved, gets them leave to be mothers and wives.
And the fancies of men change. And bitterly bought is the bread that I eat;
For, tho' purchased with body and spirit, when purchased 'tis yet all unsweet."
Her tears fell: they fell on the apple. She sigh'd . . . "Sour fruit, like the rest!
"Let it go with the salt tears upon it. Yet life . . . it were sweet if possess'd
In the power thereof, and the beauty. 'A gift for a king' . . . did he say?
Ay, a king's life is life as it should be—a life like the light of the day,
Wherein all that liveth rejoiceth. For is not the King as the sun
That shineth in heaven and seemeth both heaven and itself all in one?

Then to whom may this fruit, the life-giver, be worthily given? Not me.
Nor the fool Azariah that sold it for folly. The King! only he,—
Only he hath the life that's worth living for ever. Whose life, not alone
Is the life of the King, but the life of the many made mighty in one.
To the King will I carry this apple. And he (for the hand of a king
Is a fountain of hope) in his handmaid shall honour the gift that I bring.
And men for this deed shall esteem me, with Rahab by Israel praised,
As first among those who, tho' lowly, their shame into honour have raised:
Such honour as lasts when life goes, and, while life lasts, shall lift it above
What, if loved by the many I loathe, must be loathed by the few I could love."

So she rose, and went forth thro' the city. And with her the apple she bore
In her bosom: and stood 'mid the multitude, waiting therewith in the door
Of the hall where the King, to give judgment, ascended at morning his throne:

And, kneeling there, cried, "Let the King live for ever!
Behold, I am one
"Whom the vile of themselves count the vilest. But great
is the grace of my lord.
And now let my lord on his handmaid look down, and give
ear to her word."
Thereat, in the witness of all, she drew forth, and (uplifting
her head)
Show'd the Apple of Life, which who tastes, tastes not death.
"And this apple," she said,
"Last night was deliver'd to me, that thy servant should
eat, and not die.
But I said to the soul of thy servant, 'Not so. For behold,
what am I?
That the King, in his glory and gladness, should cease from
the light of the sun,
Whiles I, that am least of his slaves, in my shame and
abasement live on.'
For not sweet is the life of thy servant, unless to thy servant
my lord
Stretch his hand, and show favour. For surely the frown of
a king is a sword,
But the smile of the King is as honey that flows from the
clefts of the rock,
And his grace is as dew that from Horeb descends on the
heads of the flock:
In the King is the heart of a host: the King's strength is
an army of men:

And the wrath of the King is a lion that roareth by night
from his den:
But as grapes from the vines of En-Gedi are favours that
fall from his hands,
And as towers on the hill-tops of Shenir the throne of King
Solomon stands.
And for this, it were well that for ever the King, who is
many in one,
Should sit, to be seen thro' all time, on a throne 'twixt the
moon and the sun!
For how shall one lose what he hath not? Who hath, let him
keep what he hath.
Wherefore I to the King give this apple."

Then great was King
Solomon's wrath.
And he rose, rent his garment, and cried, "Woman, whence
came this apple to thee?"
But when he was 'ware of the truth, then his heart was
awaken'd. And he
Knew at once that the man who, erewhile, unawares coming
to him, had brought
That Apple of Life was, indeed, GOD'S good Angel of Death.
And he thought
"In mercy, I doubt not, when man's eyes were open'd and
made to see plain
All the wrong in himself, and the wretchedness, GOD sent to
close them again

For man's sake, his last friend upon earth—Death, the servant of GOD, who is just.
Let man's spirit to Him whence it cometh return, and his dust to the dust!"

Then the Apple of Life did King Solomon seal in an urn that was sign'd
With the seal of Oblivion: and summon'd the Spirits that walk in the wind
Unseen on the summits of mountains, where never the eagle yet flew;
And these he commanded to bear far away,—out of reach, out of view,
Out of hope, out of memory,—higher than Ararat buildeth his throne,
In the Urn of Oblivion the Apple of Life.

But on green jaspar-stone
Did the King write the story thereof for instruction. And Enoch, the seer,
Coming afterward, search'd out the meaning. And he that hath ears, let him hear.

BOOK VI.

SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

" Ἐι δε πεπόνθατε δεινά δι 'υμετερην κακότητα,
Μή τι Θεοῖς τούτφν μοῖραν ἐπαμφέρετε.
Αυτοὶ γὰρ τόυτους ηὐξήσατε ῥυσια δοντες,
Καὶ διὰ ταῦτα κακὴν ἔσχετε δουλοσύνην."—*Nicetas.*

THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

A CHRONICLE OF THE FALL OF THE GREEK EMPIRE.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I.

" La vint al Comte, si comme dit
Vn Danziaus, ki ioenes estoit
A qui toute Gresse appendoit,
Par son Oncle ies deseritès
Et de chastiaus & de citès.
Alexis ot nom, mult fu biaus,
Bien enseniés iere le Danziaus:
* * * * *
Conté li a tot son afaire,
Et li Quens ki bien li vot faire,
Li fist jurer le sairement,
Kil en iroit tout voirement
A quan qu'il poroit outremer
Auec lui s'il puet recouurer
Sa tierre, & tant faire li sache
Que couronne porter li face."—PHILIPPES MOUSKES.

I.

THE EMPEROR ISAAC.

IN gold Byzantium, girt with purple seas,
Isaac is Emperor, and reigns at ease.[1]
For, if he smiles, a swarm of gilded slaves
Smiles also, grateful for the grace that saves

Their fortunes one day longer : if he frowns,
Spears sparkle on the walls of frighten'd towns,
And half the East is darken'd : if he sleeps,
The soul of Music o'er his slumber keeps
Melodious vigil, and, down lucid floors
Of marble chambers vast, at sighing doors
Dusk faces watch, while long-hair'd large-eyed girls
Crouch at his pillow fringed with dropping pearls.
Proud to up-prop his throne, four lions—four
Large bulks of blazing gold—crook evermore
Their wrinkled backs. For him the murex dies
In Tyrrhene nets. For him, 'neath golden skies,
In gorgeous cluster, all those glittering isles
That circle Delos, where the sun first smiles,
Broider the sea's blue breast with beauty rare.
For him, thro' valleys cool'd with shadowy air,
The Phrygian shepherd leads his numerous flocks.
His are the towers on Helespontine rocks,
And his the hill-built citadels that crown
Morean bays, by many a mountain town.
For him, from antique Thessaly's witch-lands
Sweet sorceries breathe. For him, the hardy bands
Of snowy Thrace, a multitude of spears,
March with the Macedonian mountaineers.
From strong Durazzo's battlemented steep
To sultry Tarsus, and Malmistra, sweep
His glowing realms ; and to his sway respond
All Anatolia's tribes, from Trebezond

Far as the Syrian Gates. His standards float
And flash athwart Pamphylian shores remote,
Throng all Meander's many-winding stream,
And in blue Asian weather blaze supreme
From ancient cities, proud and populous,
O'ertopping temples white in Ephesus,
Sardes, and Smyrna, and among the groves
The swarthy-faced Laödicean loves,
Or where, in Philadelphia's teeming squares,
The turban'd trader spreads his silken wares.
The glories of old Rome, by all the line
Of Latin Cæsars left to Constantine,
Blaze in his eyes, to make him glad and great.
Red Asia doth green Europe emulate
Which with most lavish hand shall treasures heap
Within his palace gates. All sails, that sweep
The waters of the world and every shore,
Meet in his harbours. Princely Pages pour
For him the Chian and the Lesbian wine
In agate cups and vases crystalline,[2]
Wrought first in Rome, when thro' the Triumph Gate
Pompeïus came from conquering Mithridate.
For him, on gems and jasper stones is writ
The Arab wisdom, and the Persic wit.
For him, Greek Monks, in Thracian convents cold,
Guard Homer's songs on parchments graved with gold.
To nourish this one man a million starve:
And on his tables kingborn butlers carve

The quadripartite globe : earth, sea, and air,
Are devastated for his daily fare.
To serve him, twice ten thousand eunuchs stand,
Who start, if he but nod, or wave his hand.
Daily, his Prophet, whom for smiling views
He pays with Patriarchal revenues,
Prophesies to him of ease, pleasantness,
And length of days, glory, and great success,
And realms extended from Euphrates far[3]
As where the Lebanonian cedars are.
The grandeur of the East and of the West
Glows in his galleries. He is potent, blest,
Supreme. He hath two bloodhounds in a leash,
Terror, and Force : two slaves that serve his wish,
Pleasure, and Pomp.

II.

IS SAD.

Yet, in despite of all,
The Emperor Isaac sits in his vast hall
An undelighted man. To him all meat
Is tasteless, and all sweetnesses unsweet :
To him all beauty is unbeautiful,
All pleasures without pleasantness, and dull
Each day's delights. His women and his wine
Nauseate the sense they sate not. His lamps shine
In cedarn chambers, ceil'd with gold, as gleam
Corpse-lights in charnels. Music's strenuous stream

Of pining sounds makes passionatest pain
About his joyless heart, and jaded brain.
So harsh an echo in the hollowness
Within him dwells, that echo to suppress
He, if he could, would make the whole world mute.
He curses both the fluteplayer and the flute :
He strikes both lyre and lyrist to the ground :
The silence is less tolerable than sound.
For men's praise undeserved, the pain assign'd
To this praised man is scorn of all mankind.
To please him, Age its reverend form foregoes,
And wrinkled panders for his public shows
Invent new vices. At his least of looks
Manhood forsakes its manliness, and crooks
Beneath a truculent foot a slavish neck.
White-fronted Womanhood, if he but beck,
Wallows in shame, unshamed ; while Youth, to charm
His fancy all the Virtues doth disarm,
Disgracing all the Graces. And, for this,
He hates Man, Woman, Youth, and Age. No bliss
In youthfulness, no dignity in years,
Men to this man, by men adored, endears :
Because his greatness, being of a kind
That grows from all men's littleness combined,
Dwells self-condemn'd among the multitude
Of voices lifted to proclaim it good,
And tongues that lick the dust, and knees that fall,
And backs that cringe before its pedestal.

Him all these immense means to make him glad,
Misused immensely, make immensely sad.

III.

AND SO IS HIS BROTHER ALEXIUS : WHO PROPOSES

Beside the Emperor sits the Emperor's brother :
Companions, one as joyless as the other,
And soul-distemper'd both :—the first, with what
He hath ; the second, that he hath it not.
So, turning to Alexius, with dull eyes
By dull eyes met, Isaac the Emperor sighs
"How things desired, and had, desire destroy!
How hard it is, enjoyment to enjoy!
Advise us, Brother, how may Pleasure borrow
Some new disguise to fool the querulous Morrow
From his foreseen reproval of Today?"
Whereto Alexius,

"I have oft heard say
That more wild beasts than men be left in Thrace.[4]
Wherefore" . . .

"The chase!" the Emperor cries, "the chase?
A happy thought! Such sleep as nightly flies
The silken couch where Ease, uneasy, lies,
Perchance kind Nature charitably drops
On wearied limbs from perilous mountain tops.
And ancient poets say that pure Content
Was never yet in crowded city pent.

She, with young Health, her hardy child, they say
After the shadows of the clouds doth stray,
Or near the nibbling flocks by grassy dells,
And, bee-like, feeds at eve in myrtle bells
On little drops of dew, deliciously
As the fair Queen of Fays. I know not, I,
If that be true : but this I know full well,
That not in any palace where I dwell,
—Neither beneath Blachernæ's sculptured roofs,
Nor in Boucoleon, where my horses' hoofs,
Shod with red gold, strike echoes musical
From porphyry pavements in a silver stall,—
This Phantom hath her haunt. We'll try the woods,
Wild-water'd glens, and savage solitudes ;
And, if she hide with Echo in her cave,
We'll rouse her ; if with Naiads in the wave,
We'll plunge to find her ; tho' black Death should leap
From out the lair whence she may chance to peep.
The chase tomorrow morn ! "

IV.

A PARTY OF PLEASURE.

The morrow morn
At sunrise, to the sound of fife and horn,
Byzantium's spacious marble wharves, from stair
To stair, with broider'd cloths, and carpets rare
Of crimson seam'd and rivell'd rough with gold,
A train of swarthy servants spread and fold,

For the proud treading of Imperial feet,
Down to the granite pedestals; where meet
Thick myrtle boughs, and oleanders flush
The green-lit lymph. There, little galleys push
Their golden prows beneath the glossy dark
Of laurel leaves; and many a pleasure-bark
Lolls in the sun, with streaming bandrol bright,
And gorgeous canopies, that shut soft light
Under soft shadow. Suddenly, shrill sounds
The brazen music, and the baying hounds
Drag sideways at the hunter's hand. The drums
Throb to the screaming trumpet.

And forth comes
The Emperor.
Then his courtiers: then his slaves.

At sunset, to the wilds beyond the waves
They came: light revellers arm'd with bow and spear,
Cinct for the chase, and gay with hunting gear.
With silk pavilions gleam the lonely glens,
Glad of their unaccustom'd denizens
That shout across dark tracts of starry weather.
To grassy tufts young grooms, light-laughing, tether
Sleek-coated steeds. And, where the bubbled brooks
Leap under rushy brinks, white-turban'd cooks
In silver vessels plunge the purple wine.
Within the tents, the lucid tables shine

(Under soft lamps from burning odours lit)
With sumptuous viands ; and young wassailers sit,
With heated faces femininely fair,
And holiday arms thick-sheathed with jewels rare,
Babbling of battles. Round the mountain lawn
The sportive court leans, propp'd on skins of fawn,
And quilts thick-velveted of foreign fur,[5]
Marten, and zibeline, and miniver,
Brought by the barbarous fair-hair'd folk that come
Blithe from the north star, where they have their home
Among the basalt rocks, and starry caves
Stalactical, and walk upon the waves
Sandall'd with steel. Low-sounding angelots
Sprinkle light music in among the knots
Of laughing boys that tinkle cups of gold
Round heaps of grapes, and rough-globed melons cold,
And purple figs. There, down the glimmering green
Half-naked dance, with tossing tambourine,
Greek girls, whose flusht and panting limbs flash bare
Across the purple glooms.
At dawn, they dare
The distant crags, and storm the savage woods.
Then, all day long, thro' slumbrous solitudes
Flit the sweet ghosts of glad and healthful sounds
Scatter'd from fairy horns, and flying hounds :
And, in and out, among the thickets lone
The dazzling tumult darts ; as, one by one,
Thro' bosk and brake, gay-gilded dragon flies

Flash, and are gone. When mellow daylight dies,
Well-pleased, they bear their shaggy burthen back
To' the silken camp, adown the mountain track,
And roast the bristly boar; and quaff and laugh,
And sing, and ring the goblets gay; till, half
Drowsed, and half roused again by rosy wine,
They drink, and wink, and sink at last supine
On the fresh herbage by their watchfires red;
While the wind wakes the gloomy woods o'erhead
Unnoticed, and unnoticed, now and then,
Sound distant roarings from the rocky glen.
So pass the days, the nights: so pass the weeks,
The months.

V.

WHICH ENDS UNPLEASANTLY.

At length, the Emperor upbreaks
His wandering camp. Of wood and mountain tired,
Town-life he deems once more to be desired.
Aye, from illusion to illusion tost,
Men seek new things, to prize things old the most.
Life wastes itself by wishing to be more,
And turns to froth and scum whilst bubbling o'er.
Thus, having all things, save the joy they give,
The Imperial pauper still is fain to live
For means of life (which nothing known supplies)
Dependent on the charity of surprise.

Sick as he went, he to Byzance returns.
There, from the warders on the walls he learns
That his bold brother, whom (while he the chase
Pursued) himself had charged to hold his place
Is pleased to keep it; which the soldiery, bought,
Are pleased to sanction; and the people, taught
That Power in Place is Power where it should be,
Pleased, or displeased, obedient bow the knee.
'Tis idle knocking at your own housedoor
When your own housedog knows your voice no more.
Fly, or be bitten!

Flying all alone,
(Friendless, being powerless) into Macedon,
—A fugitive from his own guards, the scorn
Of his tame creatures, turn'd on, hunted, torn
By his own bandogs, Isaac,—yesterday
Lord paramount of half a world, great, gay,
Glorious, and strong,—today, a something less
Than all earth's common kinds of wretchedness,—
Fled from the refuse of himself; but, caught,
And back a prisoner to Byzantium brought,
They dropp'd him down a donjeon.

VI.

OUT OF THE LIGHT, INTO THE DARK.

Four wet walls:
Round which the newt, his sickly housemate, crawls

To criticize, and, being abhorr'd, abhor
What men had crown'd, and surnamed Emperor,
And tremblingly admired. A mouldy crust,
Some muddy water, once a day down thrust
Into this putrid pit, still keep aware
The nameless human thing forgotten there
That it is wretched, and alive in spite
Of wretchedness. In nothingness and night
This nothing lives: cast out of Life, flung back
By Death, unpitied. And, to make more black
The blackness that is there to blot it out,
The new-made Emperor beckon'd from the rout
Of smiling and of crawling creatures,—things
That do ill-make, and are ill-made by, kings,
Feeders of infamy, and fed by it,—
One that most smiled, and lowest crawl'd, to fit
His master's humour: unto whom he said
"Our Brother hath two eyes yet in his head,[6]
Worth nothing now to him, worth much to me.
Get them away from him, and thou shalt be
The gainer by his loss."
This deed was done.
They left him in the dark.

VII.

ALEXIUS THE YOUNGER FLIES FROM ALEXIUS THE ELDER.

He hath a son,
This miserable remnant of man's being

That lives and hath no life,—unseen, unseeing!
God gave him both a brother and a son,
And both men name Alexius. And the one
Is Emperor now, and reigns, where he once reign'd,
In bright Byzance; and drains, as he once drain'd,
In agate cups, from vases crystalline,
Careless, the Chian and the Lesbian wine,
By princes pour'd: for him, the murex dies
In Tyrrhene nets: for him, green Europe vies
With tawny Asia, to extol his state:
For him those twice ten thousand eunuchs wait
In whisperous halls: for him, the Thracian spears
March with the Macedonian mountaineers:
And him men praise.

Meanwhile, the other flees,[7]
'Scaped from his clutch, across the great salt seas,
And thanks kind heaven's rough winds that blow so rude
Upon his cheek. Among the multitude,
In seaman's garb, he, gliding secret, found
A Venice galley for Sicilia bound:
And, thence, thro' many lands, for many years,
Wandering in search of succour from his peers,
The exiled Prince draws far in foreign climes
The breath of life; and broods upon the times.

VIII.

AND TRIES HIS FORTUNES AND HIS FRIENDS.

But Greatness, God keeps fast upon its throne,

Is ever prompt full greatly to disown
Greatness by God struck down.
The Pope is wise,
Humane, and just.
The Pope the Prince first plies[8]
With the sad story of his sire's distress.
And '*Pax vobiscum!*' sighs His Holiness.
"*Leonem, Optime, mox conculcabis*"
Urges the Prince, "*me quoque liberabis*
"*De laqueo venantium.*"
Whereunto
The Pontiff
"*Cœlum dedit Domino,*
Hominum autem terram filiis.
Schismatics, also, are ye Greeks, I wis."
And still the Prince
"O Holy Father, stay!
"The Greek shall to the Latin rite give way,
If Latin arms the Grecian throne recover."

"Another time, my son, we'll talk this over.
Festina lente. Vale!" sighs the Pope,
And waives him off.
He nurses yet his hope
And flees to Germany.

In Germany
Philip is Kaiser; and by craft holds high

A brow serene above the brawling crowd,
— Fine-balanced on Fate's pinnacle, and proud.
And Kaiser Philip hath, in summers fled,
Irene, sister to Alexius, wed : [9]
And Kaiser Philip doth with deep concern
The fallen fortunes of his kinsman learn :
Concern'd the more, that he just now can spare
Nor men, nor money ; since his rival there,
The lynx-eyed Otho, lurking for a spring,
Crouches hard by, and troubles everything.
The times are wild.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross Lords [10]
(Five hundred sail, and thrice ten thousand swords)
In Zara halt, the new Crusade to plan.
And thither wends the Prince.

IX.

A GREAT MAN.

Venetian [11]
Dandalo, Doge elect, and Amiral,
And Captain, sits in solemn council hall.
His long beard, lustrous with the spotless snows
Of more than fourscore winters, amply flows
To hide the angry jewel, clasp'd with gold,
That firmly doth his heavy mantle hold.
Cover'd he sits. Above his blind bald brow
The Ducal bonnet (Tintoret shows ye how)

Glows like a sunset glory on the scalp
Of some sublime and thunder-scathèd alp.
And the furr'd velvets o'er his breastplate fall
In folded masses, as majestical
As honours on the manhood of the man.
Soon may ye tell, if ye his posture scan,
By the grand careless calmness of the way
His mantle laps and hangs, that in the play
Of this world's business he hath ever been
Chief actor, chosen for each foreground scene ;
Whence, living is to him a stately thing
Made easy by long wont of governing.
Those deep blind eyes for Venice' sake burn'd out!
Since he, whom Venice fear'd, most fear'd, no doubt,
Those eyes. The firm fine features of that face,
In strength so delicate, so strong in grace!
All those augustest opposites that mix
In some superlative character, to fix
With one strong soul, and grace with one fit frame,
Man's evanescent elements, became
Associate ministers to this man's will.
—The symbols of the valley and the hill :
The storm, the eagle, and the cataract,—
Passions, and powers that passionately act ;
The streamlet, and the vineleaf in the sun,—
Graces that gracious influence acts upon ;
Meet in the aspect of that bended head.
And the great Lion of St. Mark doth spread

His mighty wings above the baldachin
That decks the throne ; mute mid the trumpet's din,
Claiming his own.
The smooth and spacious floors
Are open-porched. Thro' airy corridors
You mark the marshal'd heralds, station'd calm
About the broad stone platform, bathed in balm
Of blissful weather, and the warm noon-light.
Down the sloped hill, the streeted city white
Hums populous. The sea-breeze, blowing in,
Flutters gay flags in harbours Zaratin ;
Heaving on ballustraded ramparts wide,
And at high casements, throng'd and balconied,
Thick streams of many-colour'd silken scarves.
And, all about the warmèd quays and wharves,
The sea is strown with snowy sails, by swarms
Of high-deck'd galleys, from whose prows the arms
Of heroes hang, and low-hull'd palanders.[12]

X.

AND SOME NOTABLE MEN.[13]

Meanwhile, among his council-keeping Sers,
The great Doge greets from his unenvied throne
The Barons, striding inwards, one by one,
From that bright background, and the golden noon,
Like banded forms on Byzant frescoes. Soon
The hall is cramm'd. Below the high daïs sit
Peers, princes, prelates, paladins.

To wit :—

The conqueror of Asti, Boniface,
Marquis of Montferrat ; who with his mace
Can brain a bull. When Theöbald, their chief,
Count of Champagne, left Christendom in grief,
Dying untimely, and dispute arose
About the headship, him the Barons chose
(Favour'd by fame, tho' foreign to the Franks)
As Dux and Daysman of the Red Cross Ranks.
Baldwin ; whose dreams are of a diadem,
Since last the Turks have tugg'd Jerusalem
From Lusignan ; content to wait meanwhile
As Count of Flanders, till his fortunes smile :
Him, also, Hainault's hardy race respect,
Scion of Charlemagne by line direct,
And cousin to the Royalty of France.
Beside him, having broken his last lance
At Bruges, in that great tourney, when the twain
First cross'd their shields, Count Henry, with his train
Of Flanders knights. Sir Guy, the Gascon ; grim
Grey, gaunt, as on the Pyrenæan rim
His own three cloudy border castles are,
Held fast for his White Heiress of Navarre,
Daughter of good King Sance, surnamed The Wise,
Blanche with the golden hair and holy eyes.
Whose husband, Theöbald, last year expired
In the fond arms of Friar Fulk, admired
By weeping Barons ; but bewail'd the most

By that stout servant of the Red Cross Host,
Geoffroy of Ville-Hardouïn, Lord of Bar
And Arcis, and the hill-side country far
As Troyes, and both the blossom-bearing banks
Of Aube ; Ambassador of all the Franks,
And Marshal of Champagne. Miles, Lord of Brie.
Geoffroy de Joinville. And those Gautiers three
Of Vignory, Montbeliard, and Brienne.
Roger de Marche. Bernard de Somerghen
William, surnamed The Red ; Lord Advocate
Of Arras, Seignieur of Bethune ; whose straight
Strong amber locks, like haum, in heaps half smother
His heavy brow. And Conon, his boy-brother.
Renier de Trit. And Jaen, the Castelain
Of Bruges. And Dreux, the Seignieur of Beaurain.
Baldwin of Beauvoir. Anseau de Kaieu.
Huges de Belines. Eustache de Cantelieu.
With shields slung frontwise o'er chain habergeons,[14]
Gautier de Stombe, and Renier de Monz.
Grey Gervais and young Heruë of Castèl,
Jakes of Avesnnes, Bernard of Monstrüel,
Robert of Malvoisin. And Nicolas
De Mailli. Guy de Coucy, he that was
The son of Adela. Those brothers two,
Stephen and Jeffry, offspring of Rotroù,
And Counts of Perche. St. Pol, to prove whose power
His daughter Elzabet had brought in dower
To Chatillon two counties. Mathieu, Lord

Of Montmorency. Trifling with the sword
He leans on, Piere, the new-made Cardinal
Of Capua; who was the first of all
To take the cross. And he of Trainel, learn'd
Bishop of Troyes, Garniers; who back return'd
Anon from spoil'd Byzance, "with nothing less"
(Quoth Alberic) "to grace his diocess
Than the true scull, from Grecian monks reclaim'd,
Of Philip the Apostle. Near him (named
By Gunther *magnæ sanctitatis vir*)
Neuelon; "on whom the Pope was pleased confer
Thessalonica's new archbishopric
Some few years afterwards," writes Alberic;
Bishop, meanwhile, of Soissons; whose grandsire,
Gerard, the Frankish chroniclers admire
As "Castelain of Laon, and noble prince;"
Return'd from Rome, well pleased, a fortnight since
With absolution won from Innocent
For Zara captured, to the discontent
Of those that sought to break the Red Cross ranks,
This prelate sits, requited by the thanks
Of pious souls, in comfortable chat
With those of Bethlehem and Halberstadt,
Receiving praise of Fulk himself; the Monk
Of Neuilly; who, when English Richard shrunk,
And Frankish Philip, from his fierce appeal,
Stirr'd up their Barons to a proper zeal;
The Boänerges of the new crusade;

A lean sharp-faced enthusiast, with shorn head
And starry eyes,—no hawk's, from Norway brought,
More vivid, or more vigilant,—his thought
So flashes thro' them 'neath his cowl's grey serge.
De Montfort; whom the Pope proclaims "God's scourge,"
Tho' styled "Hell's Hangman" by the Albigeois,
And "Bloody Simon." Louis, Count of Blois
And Chartre; the crownless kinsman of the kings
Of France and England, whose high humour springs
From blood twice royal. Peter of Courtenày;
Whose sires upon the sons of kings, men say,
Imposed their name and arms, "*three torteaux, or,*"
Which Godfrey, Bouillon's famous chieftain bore
In Christ's first battle for His sepulchre.

Not the least warlike of these warriors were
Those Bishops four, of Soissons, Bethlehem,
And Halberstadt. In conference with them
That strong-limb'd Legate, loved by Innocent,
And (thanks to skill in arms with learning blent)
Acre's Elect Archbishop, sits beside
Loces' stout Abbot. Ugo, the one-eyed,
The Lord of Forli, leaning on his spear
And whispering to the grey Gonfalonier
O' the Holy See. Pons of Sienna, lord
Of empty coffers and a hungry sword
At all men's service, trusting from the sack
Of pagan towns to take good fortune back.

John of Brienne; whose daughter Frederic
Made Queen of Naples later; Almeric,
His wife's grandfather, gave him from the grave
Jerusalem, still later; grey-hair'd, brave,
And, tho' untitled, honour'd, him men call
The noblest Christian warrior of them all.
Guy, Abbot of Sernay and Val; anon
Made by the Pope Bishop of Carcasson;
Suspected leader of the malcontents.
Henry of Orm; whose Brabant shield presents
Argent, three chevrons, gules. Roger de Cuick,
Lord only of a little bailiwick.
Garnier of Borland; whose assaults, when Hell [15]
Stirr'd him against the Church, a miracle
Defeated; for the blood of God His Son,
To warn him back, did on the rood down-run,
Seen at St. Goar, of Treves, upon the Rhein;
Sister to Godfried, that of Eppestein
Was Baron (and good Bishop Siegfried's brother)
His mother was; his sister, too, was mother
O' the other Siegfried that of Ratisbon
Was Bishop. Ogier de Sancheron.
Jaen de Friaise. Gautier de Gadonville.
Guillaume de Sains, and Oris of the Isle,
With grey Menasses: and stout-limb'd Machaire
St. Menehould's Lord: and Renaud de Dampière.
Mathieu of Valincourt: and Eudes of Ham:
And Piere of Amiens, call'd The Wolf; whose dam [16]

Was nameless Madge. Haimon of Pesmes, and Guy;
Eudes of Champlite, and Hugues of Cormory.
Eustache le Marchis, with his helmet on,
And, undisguised, his quilted gamboison,[17]
Fret by no hauberk, half-way to his knee.
Villers, and Aimory of Villerey,
Peter of Braiquel, Eudo of the Vale,
Rochfort, and Ardelliers, and Montmirail.

Pietro Alberti; who, as simple Ser
Of Venice, boasts his power to confer
Titles, he deems less grand because his sire
Help'd Dominic, the Doge, to get back Tyre
(That famous town Agenor built, say some)
From those two former foes of Christendom,
The Egyptian Kailif, and that Soldan damn'd
Who in Damascus kept his dungeons cramm'd
With Christian souls: he fingers his gold chain,
And, with a smile of careless gay disdain,
Folds his patrician robe across his knees.
Less grave, and chatting too much at his ease,
Pataleone Barbo; whose renown,
Scarce older than his senatorial gown,
Folks yet dispute. Francesco Contarini:
And that famed Ser, Thomaso Morosini:
Lorenzo Gradenigo: Giammaria
Francesco Gritti, famed in Apulia:
Daniele Gozzi: Jacopo Pisani:

And Giambattista Ercole Grimani;
Noble Venetians.

Side by side they sit,
Grey faces in grave circle. Could I fit
This rough-edged rhyme-work into finer frames
For their smooth-vowell'd, voluble, sweet names,
No wrong done, no wrench to them, bruise or wound
—As when the torturer to his engine bound
The melting-limb'd deliciousness of some
Dear lady, doom'd to luckless martyrdom,—
Friends, you should know their noblenesses all
Henceforth for ever, and to mind recall
By special name each serious face of them,
Pale, mid its pomp of purple robe and gem,
Forth peering over every fur-trimm'd vest.
Search ye the Golden Volume for the rest,
You whom fate favours, whosoe'er ye be,
With leave, once lavish'd, long denied to me,
To walk, a living man, in Venice' streets,
Where ghost meets ghost, and spirit spirit greets,
Among the doves and bells, and bounteous things
Strewn 'twixt the sky that clings, the sea that clings
To the sweet city,—'twixt gloom, glory, 'twixt
Life, death, in maze inextricably mixt
Of gorgeous labyrinth,

Leaning by the wall,

Near the great doorway, fair-hair'd, blue-eyed, tall,
Behind St. Pol (who tunes, to pass the time,
Humming unheard, an amorous Norman rhyme
To the slow music of a Latin hymn)
Bussy d'Herboise, the frank French knight, whose trim[18]
And sober surcoat, of no special hue,
Attracts, by seeming to evade, the view.
Ulric of Thun: and Charles of Aquitaine:
Eberhard, count of Traun, and castelain
Of the Imperial fortress of Pavia:
Giàn the Unnamed; for whom his mother Pia
Forgot to choose a father ere she died,
Being embarrass'd by a choice too wide;
Martin the fighting Abbot; whose priest's gown
Scarce hides the corselet which in Basil town
He bought last month, to join the northern knights
From windy burgs sea-beat on Baltic heights,
Fair-meadow'd manors, and grey castles cold,
'Mid blue Bohemian woods, on windy wold
In the dark Hartz, or Salzburg's mountains bleak.
Henry of Ofterdingen, who the week[19]
Before, came bringing, for his part, indeed,
Only his lute, his lance, his squire, his steed.
Ludwig the Ironhead, of Falkenstein:
Ulric the Hawk; whose mother Adeline
Priests say the Pope will canonize next year:
And Ottoker, men call the Blear-eyed Bear:
The Duke of Styria, leaning on his shield,

—A milk-white panther-rampant, on a field[20]
Vert: Witikind, Carinthia's Duke, some say
The bastard son of Bilstein's Countess gay,
Who, help'd by some sleek nameless Levantine,
Contrives to keep alive the ducal line.

Only the constellations and the suns
Are call'd by kingly names: the millions
Of lesser lights, in charts celestial,
Are noticed merely by a numeral.
These, but the special stars that strongest flame
In foremost firmament. No need to name
The many more, less noble, or less known,
All known, all noble; all content to own
A greater than their greatest in that great
Grey-headed, blind, old man, who sits sedate
And serious in their midst; the central soul
Of this brute power which he doth all control,
Shaping the many-minded multitude
To oneness; both the worthless and the good,
The weak, the strong. For he is born of those
High seldom spirits that of all earth's shows
Suck out the substance, and make all men's wills
The agents of their own.

XI.

LE VALET DE CONSTANTINOPLE.[21]

The trumpet shrills

Thrice in the outer porch, with brazen din,
Thrice in the vestibule, and thrice within
The vaulted aisles.
Then, thro' the clanging arch,
The gaunt, red-cross'd, steel-shirted heralds march.
Then silence.
Then, a humming, and a sound
Of metal clink'd upon the marble ground,
And, in between those six *that, either side*
The column'd entry, gleam in tabards pied,
Bare-headed, with no blazon on his breast,
Comes the discrownèd Heir of *all the East,*
Alexius Angelus, the last in line
Of those Greek heirs to Christian Constantine,
The Byzant Emperors.

Who seeks for aid
Must show how service sought can be repaid.
Therefore the Prince, as soon as on bent knee
He gave the Doge the Kaiser's letter,—free
To plead his cause before the assembled knights
Of Christendom, and urge his wrongs and rights,
—Pledges himself to pay, upon his crown,
Two hundred thousand marks of silver down:
To join the Egyptian Pilgrims: and make cease
The age-long schism dividing Rome and Greece:
To find and furnish at his proper cost,
For Christendom, and to the Red Cross Host,

For one whole year, ten thousand mounted men,
Soldier and horse : and, ever after then,
A company of fifty knights,—a Band
Vow'd to the service of the Holy Land.—
"*Le Valet de Constantinople*," states
The Frankish Chronicler, whose pen relates
What his eye witness'd, since himself was there,
"*Li cuers des genz esmeut, mainte lerme amere*
Moult durement plorant." Thus, with filial tears,
Comment and argument, to lay their fears
And lift their valours,—now, with pour'd appeal
To sacred Justice and the Public Weal,
Now, hinting novel outlets to be won
To teeming Trade,—until the set of sun,
Full passionately pleading, spake the Prince.

XII.

A BLIND MAN SEES FAR.

And all this time, Doge Dandalo,—for, since
His sight was saved from surfaces and shows
That grossly intercept the sight of those
Who, seeing many things, see nothing thro',
He with serene, unvext, internal view
Beheld all naked causes and effects
In that clear glass whereon the soul reflects,
Unshaked by Time's distraught and shifting glare,
Events and acts,—while passionately there

The Prince stood pleading, saw, as in a trance,
Constructed out of golden circumstance,
The steadfast image of a far off thing
Glorious, and full of wonder . . . .

Clear upspring
Into the deep blue sky the golden spires
That top the milkwhite towers, like windless fires:
O'er garden'd slopes, slant shafts of plumy palm
Lean seaward from hot hillsides breathing balm:
Green, azure, and vermilion, fret with gold,
Blaze the domed roofs in many a globèd fold
Of splendour, set with silver studs and discs:
And, underneath, the solemn obelisks
And sombre cypress stripe with blackest shade
Sea-terraces, by Summer overlaid
With such a lavish sunlight as o'erflows
And drops between thick clusters of wild rose
And clambering spurweed, down the sleepy walls
To the broad base of granite pedestals
That prop the gated ramparts, round about
The wave-girt city; whence flow in and out
The wealth and wonder of the Orient World:
And, high o'er all this populous pomp, unfurl'd
In the sublime dominions of the sun,
And fann'd by floating Bosphorus breezes, won
To waft to Venice each triumphant bark,
The wing'd and warrior Lion of St. Mark!

All this he saw beforehand: so foreknew
What last great deed God kept for him to do:
Which, being apprehended, was half done
In his deep soul, though yet divined by none.
So when the Prince had ended, and the Hall
Began to buzz, and those flusht faces all
To turn their glances on the Doge (because
He was the inventor of their wills) no pause
For further thought he needed: but smoothed down
Across his knee one crease of his calm gown,
And answer'd, very quietly, "It is good,"
And rose.

XIII.

QUOT HOMINES TOT SENTENTIÆ.

But then began that multitude
To murmur. And some said, "The thing is wild,
And not to be endeavour'd." Others smiled,
Play'd silent with the pomels of their swords,
And sided with the loudest. Many lords
And many princes drew themselves aside,
And, blaming all the rest, with ruffled pride,
Took ship and so departed home again,
Gnawing their beards and hinting high disdain.
So was there great division of men's minds,
And tempest worse than of the waves and winds
When tides are equinoctial. It appears
The priests first took each other by the ears,

Arguing if war be lawful, waged as well
On Christian sinner, as on infidel,
Bid text trip text, and learning learning trample.
The unlearnèd laics follow'd their example.
Those Abbots stout of Loces and of Val
With latin curses evangelical
Denounced each other. Borland then took sail,[22]
And left the camp, followed by Montmirail.
Froieville, and Belmont, and Vidame as well,
And with them the boy Henry of Castèl,
Went, swearing on the Holy Gospels Four
To come again, but never came they more;[23]
Nor spared God's wrath the recreant fugitives,
Of whom five hundred Barons lost their lives,[24]
Sunk in one ship, and hundreds more beside,
Slaughter'd by peasants in Sclavonia, died.
And daily still, some brawling baron went,
Clinking his arms and clamouring discontent
Whereon he in his burgs and towers would brood.

The Doge said very quietly "It is good."

Now, of the remnant of the Red Cross Ranks
The most part were Venetians, the rest Franks.

END OF PART I.

PART II.

"Li bruis fu mult granz par le dedenz, et le message s'en tornent, & vienent à la porte, et montent sur les chevaux. Quant ils furent de fors la porte, ni ot celui ne fust mult liez et ne fu mie granz merveille, qui il erent mult di grant peril escampé: que mult se tint à pou, que il ne furent tuit mort, & pris."

GEOFFROY DE VILLE-HARDOUIN, c. 113, p. 86.

I.

THE EMPEROR MAKES A PROCLAMATION.

ON all the walls and gateways of the town
Of great Byzantium, passing up and down,
Men read this placard:

"IN THE EMPEROR'S NAME,

Great, gracious, just, and clement! let his fame
Endure, whom may God bless and keep! Amen.
People!

It is notorious to all men
That one Alexius, son of Isaac (late
Emperor of the East; whom, by just fate
And the high hand of Heaven dethroned, our grace
And clemency, ill-merited, did place
In safety, suffering him to live) hath stirr'd
By treasonable act and traitrous word

Against our state a barbarous armament
Of Latins, chiefly out of Venice sent
And France; pretexting in the misused name
Of Christendom, by them deceived, the same
High cause which our own arms have heretofore
Not slightly served, in famous fields of yore.
Now therefore, having call'd about our throne
Our loyal liegemen, we to all make known
That we have set our price upon the head
(Six, if alive, three thousand, byzants, dead)
Of this Alexius Angelus, self-styled
Prince and Augustus, falsely, since exiled
And forfeit of his life, and titles all.
By order of our Lord Imperial
and Paramount, his servant
MUZUFER."

And after this, the city was astir
With rumours; and, from ramparts, wharves, and streets
Wild whisperers watch'd the coming of the fleets.

II.

AND RECEIVES THE AMBASSADORS.

When the Ambassadors of Venice, France,[25]
And the Allied Crusade, bearing the lance
And lion of St. Mark, the gonfalon
O' the Holy See, the sword, and habergeon,

And mace of Charlemagne, with heralds came,
Before the Emperor, and the amber flame
Of the great Oriental sunlight flow'd
Thro' the long-galleried hall, and hotly glow'd
About the pillar'd walls with purple bright,
They were at first as men whom too much light
Staggers, and blinds ; so much the inopinate
Magnificence and splendour of his state
Amazed them.

At the Emperor's right hand,
Tracing upon the floor with snaky wand
Strange shapes, was standing his astrologer
And mystic, Ishmael the son of Shur,
A swarthy, lean, and melancholy man,
With eyes in caverns, an Arabian.
Who seem'd to notice nothing, save his own
Strange writing on the floor before the throne.
At the Emperor's feet, half-naked, and half-robed
With rivulets of emeroldes, that throbb'd
Green fire as her rich breathings billow'd all
Their thrill'd and glittering drops, crouch'd Jezraäl,
The fair Egyptian, with strange-colour'd eyes
Full of fierce change and somnolent surprise.
She, with upslanted shoulder leaning couch'd
On one smooth elbow, sphynx-like, calm, and crouch'd,
Tho' motionless, yet seem'd to move,—its slim
Fine slope so glidingly each glossy limb

Curv'd on the marble, melting out and in
Her gemmy tunic, downward to her thin
Clear ankles, ankleted with dull pale gold.
Thick gushing thro' a jewell'd hoop, down roll'd,
All round her, rivers of dark slumbrous hair,
Sweeping her burnisht breast, sharp-slanted, bare,
And sallow shoulder. This was the last slave
The Emperor loved. No sea-nymph in a cave
Ever more indolently dreaming lay,
Lull'd by low surges, on a summer's day.
The midnight theft of some Bohemian witch,
Stol'n from a Moslem mother, when the rich
Turk camps in Carmel fled before the cross
That lured the remnant left by Barbaross
To Suabia's Duke, was Jezraäl. Four black dwarves
Like toads, green-turban'd, and in scarlet scarves,
The four familiars of the fair witch-queen,
With fans of ostrich feathers, dipt in sheen
Arabian dyes and redden'd at the rims,
Stood round her, winnowing cool her coilèd limbs.
And, behind these, on either side the throne,
Stand two tame jackals to Apollyon :
One, in his right, across his shoulder props
An axe, and from his left a loose cord drops,
And he is nameless, and his trade is death.
The other, whose silk vest flows loose beneath
The small enamell'd dagger at his hip,
Smiles, with a restless finger at the lip ;

Sleek, subtle, beauteous, bloodless minister
Of evil; and men call him Muzufer;
And when he smiles the people are afraid,
And hide themselves. And smiling is his trade.

The Ambassadors of the Red-cross'd Allies
Spake to the Emperor upon this wise,
"The supreme Pontiff of the Holy See
Of Rome, in concert with the sovereign, free
Republic of St. Mark, the Chevisance,
And gentlemen of Germany and France
In arms,—by us, Charles, Count of Aquitaine,
Eberhard, lord of Traun, and Castelain
Of the Imperial fortress of Pavìa,
Lorenzo Gradenigo, Giammarìa
Francisco Gritti, Jacopo Pisani,
And Giambattista Ercole Grimani,
Noble Venetians,—to Alexius, styled
And titled, falsely, Emperor, who despoil'd
His brother of the purple and high place
Of power, to him allotted by God's grace:
—Render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's own,[26]
And unto God good deeds: restore the throne,
By thee usurp'd with sacrilegious sword,
To Isaac, thine hereditary lord
And master: and so live, forgiven of men
And God. But if thou dost not this, know then
Thou art accurst, and anathematised."

The Egyptian lifted her large eyes, surprised,
And laugh'd. The scarlet-clad huge-handed man
That stood behind, with axe and cord, began,
Under a snarling lip, to gnash white teeth.
The other monster half out of its sheath
Lifted his dagger, with the self-same smile
Wherewith he had been listening all this while.
The Emperor glanced at Jezraäl, and said,
"Yon young French Envoy hath a comely head.
Answer him, girl."

The glittering witch leap'd up
With a shrill laugh, and seized a golden cup,
And shook her sparkling tunic to green flame,
And, hand on haunch, made answer
"In the name
Of Satan, and the Powers that be! Who saith
To Life 'Live not: give up thy place to Death?'
Who calleth to the Sun 'Come down: make way
For Darkness?' Who demandeth of the Day
To give his golden palace to the Night?
Life answers 'Fool! I live.' And, saith the Light,
'Thou fool! I shine.' Who cannot keep his throne
May lose it: whiles he hath it, 'tis his own.
And, were I Emperor, I would answer 'Lo!
Upon all hills that rise, all waves that flow,
And on the lives and souls of men, is cast
The shadow of my purple. Heaven is vast,

And Hell is deep. And God, if God there be,
Doth hide Himself, to leave this world to me.
Mankind is my tame dog; and, knowing it,
Fawns on me; on whose collar there is writ
Sum Cæsaris. The world is but a wheel
That draws my chariot. I hold fast my heel
Upon the neck of my cringed vassal, Time.
Fear is my slave: my household creature, Crime.
The Lords of Hell are my retainers. When
I frown or smile, all Valour dies in men,
Virtue in women: men and women are mine,
Body and soul: their blood is in my wine,
The lion croucheth on my palace floors:
And Life and Death are suppliants in my doors.
The bolted thunder hangeth on my walls,
And, lo ye, when I nod the thunder falls!'"

* * * * *

"The thunder hangeth in the hand of God,"
Lorenzo cried; "and falleth at His nod.
See ye, from yonder golden pole, that props
The baldachin his burnisht barb o'ertops,
The many-coloured silken streamers fall?
The same hand, from the same silk, fashion'd all,
Nor hath the stuff with purple tinct imprest
Essential value more than all the rest.
Great Cæsar with his fortunes to admit
Death opes his doors no wider by a whit
Than for the beggar buried in a ditch.

The dust is brother to the dust. Seeing which,
And that alone the actions of the just
Are lords forever, and defy the dust,
Repent! spread sackcloth on thy former sin.
For, by the Living Lord that listeneth in
The everlasting silences on high,
I swear—beneath the patience of the sky,
Beneath yon gorgeous canopy, beneath
Yon golden roof, tho' incensed by the breath
Of prostituted slaves like this, and throned
In pomp, and girt with power, and crown'd, and zoned
With the imperial purple of the East,
Alexius is a miscreant, and a beast.
And God shall say to him, as to that other
Whom he resembles, 'Cain, where is thy brother?'
But thou, dread degradation of the form
Of woman,—what art thou, strange glittering worm?
What public mother, to what sire unknown,
Spawn'd thee, shamed creature of a shameless throne,
That dost with insult answer Christendom?"

The Egyptian sprang, then stood death-white. A hum
As of a hornet's nest, all round the hall,
Responded to her gesture, augural
Of wrath. She stood, a sorceress brewing storm:
The jewels crackled on her stiffening form:
Her wild unholy eyes flash'd hate: the breath,
Drawn sharply in, hiss'd thro' her sparkling teeth

Close clench'd. But her rude lord, with laughter rough,
Waved to her a careless hand, and call'd 'Enough!
Crouch.' And she crouch'd: then, like a beaten child,
Whimper'd upon the marble. Drily smiled
The Emperor; and to Muzufer he said,
"The old Venice Envoy hath a reverend head
Answer thou him." But he, "Great Lord, I have
Not any knowledge nor experience, save
(What much, I doubt, delights not these grave Sers)
A little, of the various characters
Of wines and women. Nor indeed have I
Enough of latinised theology
To answer, text for text, this reverend man."

The Emperor laugh'd. "Speak thou, Arabian,
That knowest all things." Then the Arab said

"Nebuchadnezzar reign'd: and he is dead.
When Babylon was mistress of the world,
He was the lord of Babylon. Death furl'd
His face in dark: and him the world forgot.
Greek Alexander reign'd: his bones do rot.
This little earth was smaller than his state,
He held it in his hand. Men call'd him Great.
At last God blew his life out like a spark,
And he became a darkness in the dark.

To Alaric the eagle gave his wing,
His claw the lion, and the snake her sting.
His clarions, blown upon the seven hill tops,
Shook the round globe. Grasses the wild goat crops
Grow over him. A little sickness made
Of all he was nothing but dust and shade.
Attila reign'd. The strong Huns worship'd him.
All mankind fear'd him. He was great and grim.
Rome grovell'd at his feet. One night he ceased.
The worms upon his flesh have held high feast.
Behind the hosts of suns and stars, behind
The rushing of the chariots of the wind,
Behind all noises and all shapes of things,
And men, and deeds, behind the blaze of kings
Princes and paladins and potentates,
An immense solitary Spectre waits.
It has no shape : it has no sound : it has
No place : it has no time : it is, and was,
And will be : it is never more, nor less,
Nor glad, nor sad. Its name is Nothingness.
Power walketh high : and Misery doth crawl :
And the clepsydra drips : and the sands fall
Down in the hourglass : and the shadows sweep
Around the dial : and men wake, and sleep,
Live, strive, regret, forget, and love, and hate,
And know it not. This spectre saith, 'I wait.'
And at the last it beckons, and they pass.
And still the red sands fall within the glass :

And still the shades around the dial sweep :
And still the water-clock doth drip and weep :
And this is all."

"Yea," said the Emperor, "then
If thus it fare with the world's mighty men,
And there be no more greatness in the dust,
How fares it with the men the world calls just,
Who lived not for the body but the mind,
Augustin, Plato, Socrates ?"

"Behind
The mingled multitude of mortal deeds
Call'd good or ill, behind all codes and creeds,
All terrors, all desires, all hopes, all fears,
Behind all laughter, and behind all tears,"
The Arabian said, "this shapeless Spectre waits.
And no man knoweth what it meditates."

Frowning, he turn'd, and fashion'd as before,
With snaky wand, upon the porphyry floor
Strange figures, cube, and pentagram, and sphere.
The Emperor mused ; then murmur'd in the ear
Of Muzufer some word whereto replied
That minister "Let your Majesty decide.
Yet I have heard what Emperors decree
Heaven doth approve ; whereby it seems to me

This maxim may be broadly understood,
That for the good o' the state all means are good."

Thereat the Emperor rose; and from his face
Suddenly all its smiling ceased,—gave place
Forthwith to hate too deadly for disguise;
As when thro' sultry, seeming-empty skies
Suddenly rushes, wrapt in glare and gloom,
The blood-red darkness of the strong simoom.
With lips that labour'd 'neath the weight and strain
Of wrath, he cried

"You—Sir of Acquitane,
You—Sir of Traun—whose title we ignore,
Whose master styles himself an Emperor,
And is . . . . a puny Suabian Duke! You,—all,
Of Venice—whose nobility we call,
Like its new banner and filch'd patron both,
Of doubtful origin, and upstart growth!
This is our answer to your host, and you:
—Come ye as peaceful pilgrims, to pursue[27]
A pious journey to Jerusalem?
Then, nor your course we check, nor zeal condemn
Then, market free, and passage fair, expect;
Our wealth shall aid you, and our power protect.
But come ye here, in hostile arms array'd,
The sanctuary of Empire to invade?
Then,—mark me! as I live . . . . as I that speak
Am Emperor both of Roman and of Greek,

(Mark me !) I swear—and swear it by the line
Of God-like Cæsars all since Constantine,
—Your myriads, were they ten times what they be,
Our scorn shall sweep from land, and sweep from sea,
As easily as yon light fan could sweep
A swarm of midges from the unvext sleep
Of our dark-eyelash'd leman. And, in pledge
Of power to smite,—not less than we allege,
Our answer prompt to your barbarian crew [28]
Shall be your heads . . . . the head of each of you !
Yours—Sir of Acquitaine ! yours—Sir of Traun !
Fresh trophies for each gate of yonder town !
And yours—Venetian ! . . . . yours ! and yours ! and
yours !
Ho, in the gallery, there ! Bar all the doors.
No foot budge hence till we be satisfied ! "

" Disloyal lord ! . . . . Enough ! " Lorenzo cried.
" For us,—our response shall, in thunder-falls,
Be heard anon round yonder doomèd walls,
And rain'd in blood—less innocent than ours,
Ay, and less pure !—round yonder traitrous towers.
For thee,—mock emperor, true barbarian !
Whose image, stamp'd in the alloy of man,
Sullies the wealth that buys obedience base
To Treason trembling on a throne,—disgrace
Would be grace wasted. But hark . . . . ye, his
slaves !

Who falls on us must fall on iron staves.
'Ware, the first traitor here, that lifts his hand!
Christ and His cause about this banner stand.
For every hair upon our heads, a host
In arms, for Justice wrong'd, shall claim the cost.
'Ware, the first slave that stands across our path
To yonder door! This wingèd lion hath
—(For God, the giver of all strength to men,
Shall smite the smiter now, Who smote him then)
The self-same strength between the wings of him
That once, between the wingèd Cherubim,
In Ashdod smote usurping Dagon down,
And shatter'd in the dust his idol crown,
Before the captived but triumphant Ark.
Now,—God defend the Right, and good St. Mark!"

Forthwith outfurl'd, in resonant circle shone
Round those eight knights the rustling gonfalon.
And, thro' a hundred hands with hired swords
To murder purchased, march'd the Red Cross Lords
Majestic, unmolested, down the hall,
Strode thro' the startled Guards Imperial,
And from the treacherous threshold pass'd in scorn.
Alexius, with white lips, and garment torn,
Scream'd "Cowards! slaves! Is Cæsar disobey'd?
Traitors! a hundred byzants for each head
Of those eight churls! Up, bloodhounds! or the whip
Shall mend the mongrel valour that lets slip

An Emperor's quarry!"

But the Eight meanwhile,
Spurring full speed, had pass'd the embattled pile
Of the great gate. Foil'd, as they forward sprang,
Down in the gap the shrill portcullis rang.

END OF PART II.

NOTES TO PARTS I. AND II. OF THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

[1] P. 297. *Isaac is Emperor, and reigns at ease, &c.*

"ἦν οὖν τὰ περὶ δίαιταν ὁ βασιλεὺς οὗτος πολυτελέστατος καὶ διαδοτικὸς βρωμάτων τοῖς παρεστῶσιν. εἶχεν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς τὴν τράπεζαν Σολομώντειον, καὶ τὰς ἐσθῆτας ὡς ἐκεῖνος καινοφαντεῖς περιέκειτο, βουνίζων μὲν τοὺς ἄρτους, λόχμην δὲ κνωδάλων ἰχθυών τε διάπλευσιν καὶ πόντον ὄινοπα δεικνὺς τὴν ἐστίασιν. ναὶ μὴν ἑτερημέροις ἐνηυπάθει λουτροῖς, ὡσφραίνετό τε μυρεψουμένων εὐωδιῶν, καὶ ταῖς στακταῖς ἐῤῥαντίζετο, ὡς ὁμοίωμά τε ναοῦ στολαῖς ἐξάλλοις ἐκέκαστο βοστρυχίζόμενος· ἐπιδεικτικός τε ἦν ὡς ταὼς ὁ φιλόκοσμος καὶ μὴ δὶς τὸν αὐτὸν χιτῶνα ἐνδιδυσκόμενος ὥσπερ ἐκ παστοῦ νυμφίος καὶ ὡς ἐκλίμνης περικαλλοῦς ἥλιος προῆει καθ' ἑκάστην τῶν ἀνακτόρων· χαίρων δὲ ταῖς εὐτραπελίαις καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς ἀπαλῆς Μούσης ᾄσμασιν ἁλισκόμενος, ἐγερσιγέλωσί τε ἀνθρωπίσκοις συμπαραθύρων, οὐκ ἐπεζύγου Κέρκωψί τε καὶ μίμοις καὶ παρασίτοις καὶ ἀοιδοῖς τὰ βασίλεια." κ. τ. λ.

Nicetæ Choniatæ, de Isaaco Angelo, lib. iii. p. 592. 2.
(The Bonn edition, edited by Bekker.)

[2] P. 299. *In agate cups, and vases crystalline, &c.*

"Vasi d'oro, d'argento, d'agata, sorprendenti per la loro grandezza, i quali erano stati portati in trionfo da Gneo Pompeo dopo la sua vittoria su i re Tigrane e Mitridate."

Origine delle Feste Veneziane, di Guistina Renier Michiel.
Venice, 1817. Vol. 2, p. 163.

[3] P. 300. *And realms extended from Euphrates far, &c.*

See Nicet. Chon. de Isaac. Ang. lib. iii. p. 565-6.

[4] P. 302. *The chase! the Emperor cries, the chase! &c.*

See Nicet. Chon. de Issac. Ang. lib. iii. p. 593.

[5] P. 305. *Marten, and zibeline, and miniver, &c.*

"De samiz, et de dras de soie, & de robes Vaires, & Grises, & Hermines, & toz les chiers aloirs qui onques furent trouué en terre."

Ville-Hardouin, p. 102, cap. 132. Paris, 1557, folio.

[6] P. 308. *Our Brother hath two eyes yet in his head, &c.*

See Nicet. Chon. de Isaac. Ang. lib. iii. p. 595. 3. This punishment was special to the usage of the Greeks of the Lower Empire, and adopted from them by other nations. There were two ways of inflicting it. The first, by means of a bull's pizzle so applied as to force, by extreme pressure, the eyeballs out of their sockets: the second, and least painful, by pouring boiling vinegar into the eyes. See *Procopius Hist. Arcana.* There is also a curious account (which is probably false) in Egantius, *lib.* ix. *c.* 12 *de exempl. illustr. Viror. Venet. Civit.*, of the manner in which (according to this writer) the eyes of Henry Dandalo were destroyed by the Emperor Manuel,—"*candente laminâ areâ ejus oculis objectâ, quam ille intueri continuo cogeretur.*"

[7] P. 309. *Meanwhile the other flees, &c.*

"Et ejus filium Alexium interfeci jusserat; sed per quemdam Senescaldum manus ejus evadens Alexius, ad Suevorum ducem Philippum regem Alemaniæ confugit."

Alberic. Ann. MCCII.

[8] P. 310. *The Pope the Prince first plies, &c.*

See Gest. Innocent. III. p. 71-72.

[9] P. 311. *Irene, sister to Alexius wed, &c.*

She was widow of Roger, King of Sicily (the son of Tancred) and espoused Philip, the Suabian Kaiser, after the death of her first husband. In Germany she seems to have been best known under the name of Maria. Witness her epitaph in the monastery of Lorch,—

"Nobilis atque pia hic cineratur graeca Maria
Philippi regis conjux. Hanc atria regis
fac intrare pia semita virgo Maria."

[10] P. 311. *Meanwhile the Red-Cross Lords, &c.*

"Et li Quens & tous ses Barnés
S'en fu droit à Gadres alés,
V li Duc de Venise l'ot
Menet, car el faire n'en pot."
Philippes Mouskes.

[11] P. 311. *Venetian Dandalo, &c.*

He was eighty years old when elected to the Dukedom, and died thirteen years afterwards at Constantinople, where his tomb in St. Sophia (*see Ville-Hardouin*) existed till that city was taken by the Turks (*see Rhamusius*). Most authors attribute the loss of the Doge's eyesight to Manuel Comnenus; and in the present poem I have adopted this supposition, although I think the truth of it extremely doubtful. Godefroy, a monk of S. Pantaleone, writes of him that "*ad expugnandam quandam civitatem Regis Vngariæ nomine Sadram cæcatus fuit;*" and Philippes Mouskes also asserts that the Doge lost his sight at the siege of Zara. This is obviously a mistake, or perhaps even a wilful misstatement, designed to imply a divine judgment on an undertaking condemned by the Pope. But it is highly probable that his blindness was from accidental or natural causes. Sabellicus, indeed, avers that the Doge was not entirely blind, and this opinion is supported by a passage in Sanutus.

[12] P. 313. *From whose prows the arms*
Of heroes hang, and low-hull'd palanders.

Ville-Hardouin (c. 14) makes the Doge say in his reply to the embassy from the Barons, "*Nos ferons Vuissiers à passer quatre milles cinq cens chevaux, et neuf mille Escuyers.*" This indicates clearly enough the character of these vessels; which were built flat for carrying horses. The etymology of the word itself also (Huissiers—*Galies Huissieres*—from *huis*, or doors) implies that they were made with doors to open and shut for the entry and issue of the horses,—probably much after the same fashion as the flying bridges now common in Germany and America. Huges Count of S. Pol, in an epistle describing the first siege of Constantinople calls them *naves usariæ*, and the Greeks, *Hippegi, Hippagogi, Hippagones, &c.* The Sire de Joinville (Hist. of S. Louis) describes the usa e of them very distinctly:—"*Nous entrasmes*

au mois d'Aoust celuy an en la nef à la Roche de Marseille, & fut ouuerte la porte de la nef pour faire entrer nos cheuaux, ceux que deuions mener outremer. Et quant tous furent entrez, la porte fut reclouse, & estouppée, ainsi comme l'on voudrait faire un tonnel de vin: parce que quand la nef est en la grant mer, toute la porte est en eau."

It was the custom of this time for the knights to hang their shields over and along the decks of the gallies, so as to form a sort of shelter from the arrows of the enemy. This was also done for show in naval parade. Guillaume Guiart sings of the naval armament under Grimaldi,—

"*Où tant ot bannieres inclines*
Dras enarmés à euures fines,
Enuiron les bors espandus,
Lances droites, escus pandus,
Blans haubers," &c.

And again, "*Et au desous des creneleures*
De riches dras à enarmures,
Atachiés comme à bastonceaus,
Targes, banieres, penonceaus," &c.

[13] P. 313. *And some notable men.*

In Ville-Hardouin ([12]) the Doge says to the embassy from the Barons, "*vostres Seignors sont li plus hauts homes qui soient sans corone.*" Some few of these names will be familiar to every reader, but the greater number of them is unnoticed by either Gibbon or Voltaire, or any modern historian that I know of. They will be found, however, in Ville-Hardouin, Alberic, and other of the early chroniclers. The reader can, of course, if he pleases, skip the list of these Notables, which, following the fashion of the old rhymers, I have furnished for the satisfaction of a curiosity which is not likely to be felt by many.

[14] P. 315. *With shields slung frontwise o'er chain habergeons.*

These shields or scutcheons were blazoned with the arms of those who wore them, and usually slung under the neck. "Is scutum simul colloque pependit." Abbo de Bel. Par. lib. II. So, also, the Sire de Joinville, "et s'en alla à eux l'escu au coul," p. 61.

[15] P. 318. *Garnier of Borland, whose assaults when Hell, &c.*

"*Eodem anno contigit in Diœcesi Treverensi supra Renum apud S.*

Goaris oppidum, cùm Garnerus de Borlande, qui erat in parte Regis de Suevia, obsideret Ecclesiam in ipso castro sitam et munitam Clericis deintus Crucifixum locantibus in fenestra, unus de forinsecus diabolico spiritu reppletus querelum repente traxit contra Crucifixum, et ecce de Crucifixo infixo sanguis fluxit langissimè, cunctis et foris et intus qui aderant cernentibus, et ipse Garnerus territus obsidionem dimisit, et ab eo lag aufugit." Alberic, Ann. 1201.

[16] P. 318. *Whose dam*
Was Nameless Madge.

The surname and family of Marguerite his mother is not known. His father was Dreux of Amiens.

[17] P. 319. . . . . *his quilted gamboison.*

"*Tot ferri sua membra plicis, tot quisque patenis*
Pectora tot coriis, tot Gambesonibus armat."
Guillaume le Breton, lib. XI. Philipp.

So also the Sire de Joinville in his History of S. Louis, "*Je trouué illec prés un Gaubisson d'estouppes,*" &c., and Guillaume de Guigneville, in the Soul's Pilgrimage.

"*Car dessous va la Gamboison*
Qui le veut armer par raison."

It was a quilted garment of thick stuff, which went under the hauberk and reached over the thighs. That it was sometimes worn in war without armour of any kind would appear from a passage in Ville-Hardouin, as well as from the following, in which Nicetas, speaking of Conrad of Montferrat, describes his gamboison. . . "*αὐτὸς μέντου ἄνευ θυρεοῦ τηνικαῦτα διηγωνίζετο ἐκ δὲ λίνου πεποιημένον ὕφασμα οἴνῳ ἀυστηρῷ ἱκανῶς ἡλισμένῳ διάβροχον πολλάκις περιπτυχθὲν δίκην θώρακος ἐνεδύετο· ες τοσοῦτον δ'ἦν ἀντιτυπὲς ἁλσὶ καὶ οἴνῳ συμπιληθὲν ὡς παὶ βέλους εἶναι παντὸς στεγανώτερον· ἠριθμοῦντο δ'εἰς ὀκτὼκαίδεκα καὶ πλείω τὰ τοῦ ὑφάσμετος συμπτύγματα.*" From which it would seem to have been prepared with wine and salt and doubled eighteen times.

[18] P. 321. *Bussy d'Herboise, the frank French knight.*

Brother of André d'Herboise, who distinguished himself (together with Pietro Alberti the Venetian), at Constantinople.

[19] P. 321. *Henry of Ofterdingen, &c.*

Mythical.

[20] P. 322. *A milk-white panther rampant on a field Vert.*

"*Panthera alba in campo, ut vocant, viridi splendebat.*"

Wolfg. Lazii de Gent. migr. p. 223.

[21] P. 322. *Le Valet de Constantinople.*

So King Pepin, in the Roman des Loherancs, says of himself,

Iceste guerre commant à maufez vis,
Quant commença Vallez ere & meschins.

That is to say, that, when the war began, he was still valet, and young prince. In France, at this time, the Nobility consisted of Three Orders. The First, composed of all who were entitled to carry their own banner in war (hence knights Banaret—the lowest of this order): the Second, Chevaliers (simple) or knights, whose fiefs were not large enough to furnish the contingent entitled to carry a banner, and who therefore fought under the banner of some more powerful chief: these were called Bachelors, (Bacheliers—Bas Chevaliers): the Third, Esquires (Escuyers), sons of nobles of all ranks, to whose youth the genius of Chivalry assigned the grace and dignity of a noble servitude (*Ich dien*), and who carried (as a privilege) the shields (*Escus*) of their patrons in war. Camden derives the term Esquire (scutcheon-bearer), from the right to bear arms. But it is more probable that the term represents the "*devoir*" to bear the shield of another—not the right to blazon one's own. To be Chevalier or Baron, it was necessary to have risen as it were from the ranks in the service of chivalry, to have been Valet before being Lord, Soldier before being Captain, Esquire before being Knight. Our playing cards record the tradition, which our usage dishonours. The Valets, although they have become knaves, still retain the noble names of Launcelot du Lac, and Huon of Bordeaux, &c.

[22] P. 327. *Borland then took sail.*

"En cel termine se trauailla tant un halz hom de l'ost qui ére d'Alemaigne Carniers de Borlãde, que el s'en alla en une nef de mercheans."

Ville-Hardouin, 51.

[23] P. 327. . . . . *but never came they more.*

"Et li sairemenz que il firent ne furent mie bien tenu, que il ne reparérent pas en l'ost."

Id. id.

[24] P. 327. *Of whom five hundred Barons lost their lives.*

"En une nef s'en emblérent bien cinq cens, si noiérent tuit, & furent perdu. Vne altre compagnie s'en embla par terre, & s'en cuida aller par Esclavonie : & li paisant de la terre les assaillierent, & en occistrent assez."

Id. id.

[25] P. 329. *When the Ambassadors of Venice, France, &c.*

"Giunti nella sala del trono, i loro occhi furono abbagliati dallo splendore dell' oro e delle gemme, solita sostituzione al poter vero, e alla vera virtù."

Origine delle Feste Veneziane, vol. 2, p. 153.

[26] P. 332. *Render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's own, &c.*

"Quar il le tint à tort, & à perchié contre Dieu, & contre raison. Ainz est son neuvu qui çi siet entre nos . . . . fil de son frere l'Empereor Sursac. Més s'il voloit à la merci son nouou venir, & li rendoit la corone, & l'empire, nos li proieriens que il li pardonast," &c.

Ville-Hardouin, c. 73, p. 55.

[27] P. 339. *Come ye as peaceful pilgrims to pursue, &c.*

"Se vos vos i estes poure, ne disetels, il vou donnera volentiers de ses viande & de son auoir, and vos li vindiez sa terre. . . . . Car se vos estiez vint tant de gent, ne vos en porroiz vos aller, se il mal vos voloit faire, que vos ne fussiez morz & desconfiz."

Id., c. 72, p. 54.

[28] P. 340. *Our answer prompt to your barbarian crew*
Shall be your heads, &c.

"Prima però di nulla intraprendere si deliberò di spedere Ambasciatori all' usurpatore Alessio, intimandagli di remettere la città e lo scettro a Isaaco ed al giovane Alessio, che n'erano i padroni legitimi. Il tiranno non solo recusè di arrendersi, ma minacciò persin della vita gli stessi Ambasciatori."

Feste Veneziane, vol. 2, p. 152.

This, however, is not true. The Embassage was sent, not by the Barons to Alexius, but by the Emperor to them; and the only menace put forth on that occasion was what I have cited above, from Ville-Hardouin. The author or authoress of the Feste has evidently confounded the event here referred to with what Ville-Hardouin describes as having afterwards taken place between the deputies of the Barons and the younger Alexius, in reference to which that pious chronicler thanks God that the Ambassadors escaped with their lives. Justification for the episode, as I have related it, exists nevertheless in the universal custom of the time to address in the first instance, by embassage, a summons to the sovereign against whom war was to be declared, and the fact, which is sufficiently attested by Ville-Hardouin, that on these occasions the Ambassadors were sometimes placed in no small peril of their lives.

END OF VOL. I.

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